THE HUDSUCKER PROXY

Original Screenplay

by

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The Hudsucker Proxy

BLACK

No image. A bleak wind moans. Hold.

With a stinging chord we cut to:

CITY SKYLINE NIGHT

Circa 1958. Lights twinkle. Snow falls. The wind moans.

After a beat, the voice of an elderly black man:

Narrator
That's right. . . New York.

We are tracking high through the night sky. From the streets far below we hear the sounds of traffic muffled by the falling snow, and the distant sound of many voices singing.

We are drifting among the buildings; the tops of skyscrapers slip by left and right.

Narrator
It's 1958--anyway, for a few mo' minutes it is. Come midnight it's gonna be 1959. A whole nother feelin'. The New Year. The future. . .

The singing, a little more audible but still not close, is "Auld Lang Syne."

. . . Yeah, ole daddy Earth fixin' to start one mo' trip round the sun, an' evvybody hopin' this ride round be a little mo' giddy, a little mo' gay. . .

We are moving in towards a particular skyscraper. At its top is a large illuminated clock.

. . . Yep. . .

We hear a series of popping sounds.

. . . All over town champagne corks is a-poppin'. . .

A big-band waltz mixes up on the track.

. . .Over in the Waldorf the big shots is dancin' to the strains of Guy Lombardo. . . Down in Times Square the little folks is a-watchin' and a-waitin' fo' that big ball to drop. . .

The Lombardo music gives way to the chanting of a distant crowd: "Sixty! Fifty-nine! Fifty-eight!"

. . . They all tryin' to catch holt a one moment of time. . .

The chanting has mixed back down again to leave only the wind. Still tracking in toward the top of the skyscraper, we begin to hear the tick of its enormous clock. The clock reads a minute to twelve. Above it, in neon, a company's name: HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES. Below it, in neon, the company's motto: THE FUTURE IS NOW.

. . . to be able to say--"Right now! This is it! I got it!" Course by then it'll be past.
(more cheerfully)
But they all happy, evvybody havin' a good time.

We are moving in on a darkened penthouse window next to the clock. The window starts to open.

. . . Well, almost evvybody. They's a few lost souls floatin' round out there. . .

A young man is crawling out of the window onto the ledge. With the opening of the window "Auld Lang Syne" filters out with greater volume.

. . . This one's Norville Barnes.

The man gingerly straightens up on the ledge. He is perhaps in his late twenties. He wears a conical New Year's Eve cap and a leather apron. Printed on the apron: HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future Is Now.

He looks with nervous determination into the void.

. . . Let's move in for a closer look.

The camera obliges. We track in slowly, ending very close.

. . . That office he jes stepped out of is the

office of the president of Hudsucker Industries. It's his office. . .

Norville sways in anguish as the ticking of the clock grows louder and the wind blows in his face.

. . . How'd he get so high? An' why is he feelin' so low? Is he really gonna do it---is Norville really gonna jelly up the sidewalk?

Norville is swinging back his arms, tensing up his body, preparing to make a swan dive into oblivion--but the camera's continued movement is losing him from frame. We are moving in on the enormous clock, whose ticking is becoming very loud indeed.

. . . Well the future, that's something you can't never tell about. . .

The second hand of the clock is nearing twelve--bare seconds to midnight. Distant chanting from Times Square mixes up: "Nine! Eight! Seven!"

. . . But the past. . . That's another story. . .

OVER BLACK

The regular beat of the clock mixes into the irregular beat of feet, many feet, walking.

FEET

Walking busily. The polished shoes of business people, commuters, travelers, mixed in with the white cuffs of redcaps accompanied by baggage cart wheels. On the hiss of an airbreak we cut to:

DESTINATION DISPLAY

On the front of a bus just rocking to a halt. The display says MUNCIE-NEW YORK.

We are booming down off the display as the bus door opens to discharge passengers.

One among them pauses to admire the wonders of the big city bus station. He is young--twenties--eager, fresh-eyed: NORVILLE BARNES.

CITY STREET

On many walking feet. One pair stops.

NORVILLE

Stopped, looking off, as busy people eddy around him.

HIS POV

The front window of a diner where a HELP WANTED sign hangs.

Norville enters the diner.

BURLY GRIZZLED OWNER/COOK

The hash house owner sizes Norville up, then jerks a thumb back over his shoulder to show Norville:

SWISH PAN TO:
DISHWASHER AND DISH DRYER.

Two veterans of the hash house are doing the dishes. The first quickly slaps a plate with soapy water, rinses it in a second sink, and without looking tosses the plate back over his shoulder.

SWISH PAN TO:

The second man deftly swipes plate after plate out of mid-air, towel-dries and stacks them.

SWISH PAN BACK TO:

The drier--Norville now, in a white apron. He stands with his body tensed, on the balls of his feet, ready to receive plates.

He misses one, two--all of them. Plates shatter on the wall behind him, showering him with shards.

SWISH PAN TO:
FRONT WINDOW OF DINER

The HELP WANTED sign is being put back in the window.

CUT TO:
CLOSE SHOT EXECUTIVE

A middle-aged, mousy-looking man in a conservative suit and wire-rimmed spectacles is addressing his remarks to someone off camera. Behind the executive we see only the skyline of New York City.

Executive
--so in the third quarter we saw no signs of weakening. We're up 18% over last year's third quarter gross and, needless to say, that's a new record. . .

TRACKING

Down the length of the board room table. Executives line either side. We are approaching the man, at the far end of the table, to whom the report is being directed. He is late middle-aged, dressed expensively but conservatively, his attention smilingly fixed on the executive who drones on.

Executive
. . . The competition continues to flag and we continue to take up the slack. Market share in most divisions is increasing and we've opened seven new regional offices. . .

The track has ended in a close up of the man at the end of the table, who still smiles benignantly at the droning executive. The smile is serene, almost otherwordly. This is WARING HUDSUCKER.

THE REPORTING EXECUTIVE

He drones on.

Executive
. . . Our international division has also shown vigorous upward movement in the past six months and we're looking at some exciting things in R & D. . .

The camera slowly pans off the droning executive as the big man's attention apparently wanders; we frame up on the picture window skyline of New York.

. . . Sub-franchising. Don't talk to me about sub-franchising; we're making so much money in sub-franchising it isn't even funny.

STORE SIGN: FRANK BROS. HABERDASHERY

SIGN IN FRONT WINDOW

It says SALES HELP WANTED; a hand reaches in to remove it.

STORE INTERIOR

Norville is cramming a fat person into a suit two sizes too small. The fatso is sweating and wheezing. The suit splits. The fat man tries to look back over his shoulder. Norville tries to hug together the split seam.

The man's pants split and drop, revealing boxer shorts with dancing blue elephants.

The boxer shorts split.

FRONT WINDOW

The SALES HELP WANTED sign is replaced.

SKYLINE NEW YORK CITY

Again looking through the boardroom window as, offscreen, the reporting executive drones on.

Executive
. . . Our owned-and-operateds are performing far above expectations both here and abroad, and the federal tax act of 1958 is giving us a swell writeoff on our plant and heavies. . .

WARING HUDSUCKER

looks dreamily out the window. His attention returns to the droning executive and the benignant smile returns to his lips.

Executive
. . . The news in the money market isn't good--it's excellent. . .

CUT TO:
NORVILLE'S BACK

We are tracking behind him as he walks.

A piece of newspaper is eddying around, blowing after him. It misses all the other passers-by and slaps into Norville.

He bats it away.

The newspaper eddies around some more, then again, insistently, plasters against Norville.

He peels it off and is about to toss it away but stops, noticing something.

NEWSPAPER SCRAP

It is a section of the want ads. A slash of light falls across one entry:

THE FUTURE IS NOW
Start building yours at
Hudsucker Industries.
Entry level. Long Hours.
Low pay. Poor conditions.
Apply Personnel,
285 Madison Avenue

BACK TO NORVILLE

He looks up from the paper. There is purpose in his gaze. Wind whips his hair.

CUT TO:
CLOSE SHOT WARING HUDSUCKER

As the executive drones on, offscreen, Hudsucker is carefully winding his wristwatch.

Executive
. . . Our nominees and assigns continue to multiply and expand extending our influence regionally, nationally and abroad. So third quarter and year-to-date, we've set a new record for sales. . .

Hudsucker looks up from his watch, smiles, runs his palms back over his fringe of hair.

. . . new record in gross. . .

Hudsucker pulls his sleeve cuffs to expose just the right amount under his suit.

. . . new record in pre-tax earnings. . .

Hudsucker takes one puff from his cigar and carefully sets it in his ashtray.

. . . new record in after-tax profit. . .

He deliberately unstraps his wristwatch and looks at its face.

The sweep second hand is starting the last revolution that will end precisely at noon.

. . .and our stock has split twice this year. . .

Hudsucker lays his watch carefully on the table.

. . . In short. . .

Savoring a pause, the executive looks around the table.

. . . we're loaded.

This draws an appreciative chuckle from the board. It is cut off by:

Hudsucker

Ahem. . .

The board turns expectantly to Hudsucker, who sits in the foreground. Beyond him is the length of the board table and the large picture window. He rises to his feet, slowly and deliberately, and rubs his palms together.

He swings his chair out.

He steps up onto the chair.

The board stares.

He steps up from the chair onto the board table.

The heads of the board members swing up in unison.

Hudsucker is framed from mid-torso down. He shakes the tension loose from each leg, then waggles both arms

dangling at his sides, like an athlete preparing for a sprint.

Executive
. . . Mr. Hudsucker?

CLOSE SHOT NORVILLLE

Looking down at the scrap of newspaper. He looks up.

HIS POV _____

The main entrance to a large office building. Its street number tops the entryway in large gilt letters: 285.

Norville enters frame and crosses the busy street to disappear into the building.

We TILT UP the length of the skyscraper, to reveal a huge clock capping its facade.

Above the clock is the identification HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES. Below the clock is the motto THE FUTURE IS NOW.

The huge clock's sweep second hand is just approaching the position that will make the time 12:00 sharp.

As the second hand hits the twelve, the board room window shatters and Waring Hudsucker comes flying out.

Hudsucker
AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH. . .

SECRETARIAL AREA

Somewhere in the Hudsucker Building. A secretary sits typing next to an open window, finished pages sitting stacked beside her.

Hudsucker
aaaaaAAAAAAAAaaaaaahhh. . .

As Hudsucker shoots past the window, his draft sends the stack of papers wafting this way and that. As the secreatary turns to look out the window, FREEZE FRAME (wafting papers have their motion arrested) and SUPER A TITLE.

TRACKING

with Hudsucker, the building slipping by behind him. As he yells he calmly runs his palms back over his fringe of hair.

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE

HOT DOG VENDER

on the street, handing a steaming frank to a customer who is handing him some change. As we hear the approaching Hudsucker, both men look up. On their look

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE

PASSERBY ON SIDEWALK

The man, wearing a fedora, is in the foreground of an EXTREME LOW ANGLE whose background is the bottom three or four stories of the Hudsucker Building.

The passerby reacts to the approaching yell, looking up just as Hudsucker enters frame.

FREEZE FRAME to suspend Hudsucker a good twenty feet above the sidewalk, arms and legs splayed, comically arrested. The passerby is frozen in an attitude of surprise and disbelief.

SUPER the title of the film: THE HUDSUCKER PROXY.

UNFREEZE to send Hudsucker plummeting through the frame to his rendezvous with the sidewalk, below frame.

DUTCH-ANGLE

The Hudsucker Building lists up into the distance. A woman in a fancy fruited hat with a black veil rises into frame at an opposing slant. Looking down at the sidewalk, she sends two dismayed hands to her cheeks and SCREEEEEEEEEAMS.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:
EXT TOP FLOOR

We are floating in towards the shattered board room window. The woman's scream on the street below is faint, echoing,

mixing into the sound of an approaching siren.

Through the window we see the board members still sitting around the table, paralyzed in attitudes of horror and disbelief. All stare at the shattered window in the foreground.

At the far end of the table, Hudsucker's chair is empty and oddly askew. His cigar still smokes in its ashtray. There are dust footprints down the middle of the long oak table.

One executive sits with a plumming cigarette held halfway to his mouth; another holds a gurgling carafe over a water glass that is already overflowing; another holds his spectacles inches from his nose.

We hear only the ticking of the Hudsucker Clock.

SID MUSSBURGER enters frame at the window. He is a tall middle-aged executive with lean and rugged good looks and a commanding presence.

He knocks a last piece of glass out of the sill with his knuckle, looks out, grunts, and draws his head back in.

The camera follows him into the room. The other board members' heads swivel to watch him, all staring, searching desperately for some hint as to the fate of their fallen leader. Apparently, some absurd hope still lingers.

MUSSBURGER perches on the board table by his own chair. He reaches over to pluck the smoking cigar from the suicide's ashtray.

Mussburger
Pity to waste a whole Monte Cristo.

The other board members unfreeze, their worst fears confirmed.

An executive
He could've opened the window.

Elderly executive
Waring Hudsucker never did anything the easy way.

Sobbing executive
My God, why?! Why did he do it?! Things were going so well!

Mussburger
What am I, a headshrinker? Maybe the man was

unhappy.

Sobbing executive
He didn't look unhappy!

An executive
So what? He didn't look rich.

Elderly executive
Waring Hudsucker was never an easy man to figure out. (reminiscing) He built this company with his bare hands. Every step he took was a step up. Except of course this last one.

Mussburger
Sure, sure, he was a swell guy, but when the president, chairman of the board and holder of 87% of the company's stock drops forty-four floors--

Precise executive
Forty-five--

Elderly executive
Counting the mezzanine--

Mussburger
--then the company has a problem. Stillson, what exactly is the disposition of Waring's stock?

Stillson
Well, as you know, Hud left no will and had no family. The company bylaws are quite clear in that event. His entire portfolio will be converted to common stock and will be sold over the counter as of the first fiscal year following his demise.

Mussburger
Meaning?

Stillson
Meaning simply that Waring's stock, and control of the company, will be available to the public starting on January 1st.

Mussberger
You mean to tell me that any slob in a smelly T-shirt will be able to buy Hudsucker stock?

Stillson shrugs.

Stillson
The company bylaws are quite clear.

Sobbing executive
My God! You're animals! How can you discuss his stock when the man has just leapt forty-five floors--

Precise executive
Forty-four--

Elderly executive
--Not counting the mezzanine.

Mussburger
Quit showboating, Addison, the man is gone. The item now on the agenda is whether we're going to let John Q. Public waltz in and buy our company.

Pipe-smoking executive
What're you suggesting ? Certainly we can't afford to buy a controlling interest.

Mussburger
Not while the stock is this strong. How long before Hud's paper hits the market?

Stillson
January 1st.

An executive
Thirty days.

Another executive
Four weeks.

Elderly executive
A month at the most.

Mussburger
One month to make the blue-chip investment of the century look like a round-trip ticket on the Titanic.

An executive
We play up the fact that Hud is dead.

All (in unison)
LONG LIVE THE HUD!!

Another executive
We depress the stock--

Yet anothet executive
--to the point where we can buy fifty percent.

Precise executive
Fifty-one.

Elderly executive
Not counting the mezzanine.

Cautious executive
It could work.

Optimistic executive
It should work.

Practical executive
It would work.

Mussburger
(at the ticker tape machine)
It's working already. Waring Hudsucker is abstract art on Madison Avenue. All we need now is a new chairman who will inspire real panic in our stockholders.

Enthusiastic executive
Yeah, a puppet!

Another excutive
A proxy!

Yet another executive
A pawn!

Mussburger strides across the room from the still chattering ticker tape machine and lowers himself into Waring Hudsucker's chair. He takes a last puff from his cigar and slowly exhales a cloud of smoke.

Mussburger
Sure, sure. Some jerk we can really push around.

CUT TO:
SWINGING STEEL DOORS

They read MAIL ROOM. They burst open before Norville who wears a mail clerk's leather apron, imprinted HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future is Now. The hellish mail room is criss-crossed by pipes that emit hissing jets of steam.

As he wheels a piled-high mail cart down the aisle, Norville is accompanied by an orientation agent who bellows at him over the clanging clamor and roar of many men laboring in the bowels of a great corporation.

Agent
YOU PUNCH IN AT 8:30 EVERY MORNING EXCEPT YOU PUNCH IN AT 7:30 FOLLOWING A BUSINESS HOLIDAY UNLESS IT'S A MONDAY AND THEN YOU PUNCH IN AT EIGHT O'CLOCK! YOU PUNCH IN AT 7:45 WHENEVER WE WORK EXTENDED DAY AND YOU PUNCH OUT AT THE REGULAR TIME UNLESS YOU'VE WORKED THROUGH LUNCH!

Norville
What's exte--

Agent
PUNCH IN LATE AND THEY DOCK YA!

People on either side of the aisle bellow at Norville and stuff envelopes and packages under his elbows, into his pockets, under his chin, between his clenched teeth, etc.

First screamer
THIS GOES TO SEVEN! MR. MATUSZAK! URGENT!

Agent
INCOMING ARTICLES, GET A VOUCHER! OUTGOING ARTICLES, PROVIDE A VOUCHER! MOVE ANY ARTICLE WITHOUT A VOUCHER AND THEY DOCK YA!

Second screamer
TAKE THIS UP TO THE SECRETARIAL POOL ON THREE! RIGHT AWAY! DON'T BREAK IT!

Agent
LETTER SIZE A GREEN VOUCHER! FOLDER SIZE A YELLOW VOUCHER! PARCEL SIZE A MAROON VOUCHER!

Third screamer
THIS ONE'S FOR MORGATROSS! CHOP CHOP!

Agent
WRONG COLOR VOUCHER AND THEY DOCK YA! SIX-SEVEN-EIGHT-SEVEN-ZERO-FOUR-NINER-ALPHA-SLASH-SIX! THAT IS YOUR EMPLOYEE NUMBER! IT WILL NOT BE REPEATED! WITHOUT YOUR EMPLOYEE NUMBER YOU CANNOT CASH YOUR PAYCHECK!

Fourth screamer
THIS GOES UP TO TWENTY-SEVEN! IF THERE'S NO ONE THERE BRING IT DOWN TO EIGHTEEN! HAVE 'EM SIGN

THE WAIVER! DON'T COME BACK DOWN HERE WITHOUT A SIGNED WAIVER!!

Agent
INTER-OFFICE MAIL IS CODE 37! INTRA-OFFICE MAIL IS 37 DASH 3! OUTSIDE MAIL IS 3 DASH 37! CODE IT WRONG AND THEY DOCK YA!

Fifth screamer
I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE THIS ON TWENTY-EIGHT TEN MINUTES AGO! COVER FOR ME!

Agent
THIS HAS BEEN YOUR ORIENTATION! IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND? IS THERE ANYTHING YOU UNDERSTAND ONLY PARTIALLY? IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY ORIENTED YOU MUST FILE A COMPLAINT WITH PERSONNEL! FILE A FAULTY COMPLAINT AND THEY DOCK YA!

A man is running up to Norville with an armload of letters overflowing onto the floor. He rushes into an extreme close-up and, veins popping, bellows above the mail-room din:

Man
SORT'EM! SORT'EM NOWWWWWWWW!

CUT TO:
NORVILLE

seated in front of a shelf of cubbyholes. As we follow his hand drawing an 8 X 10 envelope across the line of alphabetized mail slots. The envelope is addressed to MAX KLOPPITT, JR.

Muttering to himself:

Norville
. . .bring it down to fif(?). . .fifteen. . . sign the voucher, uh, waiver. . . cover for Mr. Anatole. . . he's a swell guy. . . Morgatross. . . He was on, uh. . .

He is coasting across the "K" mail slots, finally comes to MAX KLOPPITT, SR. His hand moves to the next slot, MAX KLOPPITT, JR. This slot is half the size of all the others. The envelope will not fit in.

He frowns.

He is about to fold the envelope, but notices something stamped in red on its face: DO NOT FOLD.

Norville frowns. As he stares at the envelope, we see envelopes swishing across in the foreground, whipping one by one in rapid succession, left to right.

CLOSE UP ANCIENT SORTER

An old man sitting at the adjacent shelf, sorting mail. Without ever looking up, and with a constant high-speed back and forth flicking of his right hand, he is whisking pieces of mail one by one out of the pile of mail in his left hand.

ANCIENT SORTER'S SHELF

As his letters fly furiously but neatly into their mail slots.

NORVILLE

Watching. Raising his voice over the mail room din:

Norville
Say, what do you do when the envelope is too big for the slot?

The Ancient Sorter considers this as he continues whisking his mail. Without looking up:

Ancient Sorter
Well. . . if ya fold 'em, they fire ya. . .

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

. . . I usually throw 'em out.

Norville takes out a pencil and writes on the face of the envelope:

Dear Mr. Kloppitt,
Please give this letter to your son.
Thank you,
Norville Barnes

After a moment he adds:

Your friend in the mail room.

He is talking as he writes:

Norville
Just got hired today!

Ancient Sorter
Terrific.

Norville
Ya know, entry level!

Ancient Sorter
Tell me about it.

Norville
I got big ideas, though!

Ancient Sorter
I'm sure you do.

Norville
For instance, take a look at this sweet baby. . .

Norville is taking an envelope from his pocket and handing it to the Ancient Sorter.

. . . You look like you can keep a secret. . .

The Ancient Sorter is pulling a ragged piece of paper from the envelope. On the paper is a crudely-drawn circle.

. . . Something I developed myself. Yessir, this is my ticket upstairs.

The Ancient Sorter looks questioningly from the circle to Norville. Norville explains:

. . . You know, for kids!

The Anceint Sorter nods with feigned understanding as Norville takes the paper back.

Ancient Sorter
Terrific.

Norville
So ya see, I won't be in the mail room long.

Deadpan:

Ancient Sorter

Nooo, I don't guess you <u>will</u> be.

He resumes his sorting.

Norville
How long've you been down here?

Ancient Sorter
Forty-eight years. . .

Whisk. Whisk.

. . . Next year they move me up to parcels. . .

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

. . . If I'm lucky.

A bell clangs.

The public address system sputters to life.

Public Address
Attention Hudsucker employees. We regretfully announce that at 12:01 this afternoon, Hudsucker Time, Waring Hudsucker, Founder, President, and Chairman of the Board of Hudsucker Industries, merged with the infinite. To mark this moment of corporate loss, we ask that all employees observe a moment of silent contemplation.

All hubub abruptly stops and the sounds of heavy machinery, hissing steam pipes, and generators wind down to leave total silence. After a moment:

. . . Thank you for your kind attention. This moment has been duly noted on your time cards and will be deducted from your pay. That is all.

The machinery groans back into action and the people return to their jobs just as:

A steam whistle screeches.

Alarm bells go off.

From the public address system:

"Blue Letter! Blue Letter!"

The mail room is thrown into pandemonium.

Various voices
Blue Letter! . . . It's a blue letter!. . .
They're bringing down a blue letter!

One man spins to face the camera, his hands pressed over his ears. Steam jets and hisses behind him.

Man
Blue Letter!!

Animated for the first time:

Ancient Sorter
Jiminy cripes, a blue letter!

Mail carts and other paraphernalia are abruptly swept out of the crowded aisle to form a clear path running down to an elevator in the baclground.

With a siren sound, a light above the elevator goes on. The elevator door sweeps open. It reveals a wall into which a four-foot high hinged door is set.

This door swings open, and an old dwarf emerges: OLD MAN HUTCHINSON, the boss of the mail room. He emerges from the blinding light of the interior of the elevator. He is holding aloft a letter.

He takes loping dwarfstrides down the aisle.

TRACKING ON THE LETTER

In close shot, as Hutchinson bears it along. In the background, the faces that the letter passes are agog.

CROSS CUT THE APPROACHING BLUE LETTER WITH:
NORVILLE AND THE ANCIENT SORTER

The Ancient Sorter is leaning over to whisper into Norville's ear.

Ancient Sorter
It's a blue letter. . . top, top level. . .
confidential communication between the brass. . .
usually bad news. . . they hate blue letters
upstairs. . . Hate 'em!

Norville gulps.

Hutchinson

You!

Norville looks over his shoulder, but the Ancient Sorter has disappeared.

Hutchinson
. . . Yeah, you! BARNES!

As he points, the people around Norville shrink away.

. . . You don't look busy! Think you can handle a blue letter?

He laughs sadistically.

. . . This letter was sent down this morning by the big guy himself! Ats right, Waring Hudsucker! It's addressed to Sid Mussburger! Hudsucker's right-hand man! It's a blue letter! That means you put it right in Mussburger's hand. No secretaries! No receptionists! No colleagues! No excuses!

DRAMATIC TRACK IN ON NORVILLE

As Hutchinson talks he thrusts the blue letter into Norville's face. Norville looks at it with terrific apprehension. As Hutchinson's speech ends, we are tight on Norville's sweating face.

COMPLEMENTARY TIGHT DUTCH ANGLE ON HUTCHINSON

We can see the veins in his eyes, the veins in his nose, the hairs in his ears.

Hutchinson
MUSSBURGER!!

CUT TO:
ELEVATOR DOORS

Rocketing open. We move slightly in on the young elevator operator who leers into the camera. He wears a brass-buttoned uniform, white gloves and a pillbox hat. The name BUZZ is stitched onto his breast pocket.

As Norville enters the elevator:

Buzz
Hiya, buddy! The name is Buzz, I got the fuzz. . .

He lifts his pillbox hat to reveal a white crew-cut, then lets the elastic chin-strap snap the cap back down onto his head.

. . . I make the elevator do what she duzz!

He holds out his hand but as Norville reaches to shake it he snaps it away and pats down his crew-cut.

. . . Hang it up to dry.

He laughs and powers the elevator into gear. Norville's knees buckle under what seems to be a huge upward surge; Buzz is accustomed to it.

. . . What's your pleasure, buddy?

Regaining his balance:

Norville
Forty-fourth floor, and it's very--

Buzz
Forty-four, the top brass floor say buddy! What takes fifty years to get up to the top floor and thirty seconds to get down?

Norville
I--

Buzz
Waring Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha-ha! Say buddy!

With a powerful down-shifting sound Buzz brakes the elevator to a sharp halt. Norville continues upward with the inertia, painfully smacking his head against a corner of the elevator.

Buzz opens the door and three people enter.

Buzz
Mr. Kline, up to nine. Mrs. Dell, personnel. Mr. Levin, thirty-seven.

Mr. Levin
Thirty-six.

Buzz
Walk down. Ladies and gentlemen, step to the

rear; here comes gargantuan Mr. Grier.

An obese man enters, smoking a cigar.

Fat Man
Buzz.

Buzz has already thrown the doors shut and sent the elevator into its power-rise. Norville has braced himself this time and sinks only a little under the G-force.

Buzz
Say buddy! Who's the most liquid businessman on The Street?

Norville
Well, I--

Buzz
Waring Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha-ha! Say buddy! When is the sidewalk fully dressed? When it's "wearing" Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha!

He turns to look at Norville.

. . . Ya get it buddy, it's a pun, it's a knee-slapper, it's a play on Jesus, Joseph and Mary, is that a blue letter?!

All heads in the elevator turn, aghast, to look, and those near Norville shrink away.

. . . Cripes a'mighty, whyn't ya tell a guy?! Hold on folks, we're express to the top floor!

The elevator screams into overdrive and we:

CUT TO:
ELEVATOR DOORS

Sweeping open. Norville staggers out.

Buzz
(hissing)
Good luck, buddy!

The doors sweep shut. Norville looks nervously around.

Behind him the elevator doors suddenly open again.

Buzz

--You'll need it!

The elevator doors slam shut and we hear its engines scream as it power-dives away.

Norville turns toward the executive offices.

Plush, thick-carpeted silence.

Norville starts walking.

A scraping sound stands out in the high-powered executive quiet. Norville looks to one side.

A workman in painter's overalls squats in front of a pair of heavy oak doors. With a razor blade he is scraping off the name "WARING HUDSUCKER".

Norville
. . . Mr. Mussberger's office?

The scraper looks sullenly over his shoulder at Norville. With a jerk of his thumb he indicates the direction.

Norville enters the adjacent office.

HIS POV

Two secretaries are in Mussburger's outer reception office. The first is a filing secretary who stands frozen in the foreground, her hand poised over an open drawer to deposit a folder, as she stares at Norville with an amused and supercilious sneer which stays pasted on throughout.

The second secretary--the receptionist--is seated behind a desk in the background that flanks the door to Mussburger's private office. The receptionist sits with her hands clasped on the desk ,staring at Norville with the hunch-shouldered down-from-under look of a patient vulture.

Receptionist
Do you have an appointment?

Norville
Uhh, no, I--

The filing secretary sneers.

Receptionist
Shall we look in the book, hmmmmmmmmm?

She opens an enormous leather-bound book wth yellowed

crinkly pages.

Norville
No ma'am, ya see, I wouldn't be in the--

Receptionist
We don't seem to be in the boooook.

Norville is groping in his apron pocket.

Norville
Yes ma'am, I mean no ma'am, I don't have an--

Receptionist
If we had an appointment we'd be in the booook.

Norville
Ya see I have this--here it is, this letter--

A low, unearthly wail fills the room, the sound of a million souls moaning in purgatory. Building. Louder.

The receptionist looks up.

FAST TRACK IN

On the sneering file secretary, who is no longer sneering. Her mouth is stretched wide as she wails and her finger points. . .

FAST TRACK IN

On the blue letter that Norville holds innocently at his side.

BACK TO TRACK IN ON WAILING SECRETARY

As her wail becomes deafening and we track into her mouth and the screen goes black and:

CLICK

The blackness and the wailing are both cut short by the sound of a door opening. We are inside Mussburger's office looking at its door as it swings open to admit Norville.

In the background, in the outer office, we can see the filing secretary leaning back motionless in a chair with a

damp rag draped across her forehead. The receptionist is fanning her with a towel.

The door closes behind Norville.

We hear a rhythmic click-click-click and the hum of ventilation.

NORVILLE'S POV

Across miles of carpet is a huge executive desk, behind which is a large executive chair facing the window. From above the back of the chair cigar smoke wreathes up. A telephone cord snakes around to the man sitting in the chair, hidden from us. On the desktop is a perpetual-motion machine of large swinging ball bearings. Click-click-click.

A ticker-tape machine occasionally burps information in the far corner of the office.

A huge mechanical arm--the sweep second hand of the Hudsucker clock on the facade of the building--rumbles by immediately outside the window, throwing a shadow that slithers across the office.

His back to us, into the phone:

Mussburger
--Sure sure, Parkinson's stupid but he's ambitious, too hard to control. . .

He swivels around to face Norville, who stands deferentially at the door. Still listening at the phone, Mussburger waves Norville forward.

Mussburger
. . . No! Not McClanahan; sure he bungled the Teleyard merger, but that means he's got soemthing to prove. . .

He covers the mouthpiece.

. . . Who let you in?

Norville
I--

Into the phone:

Mussburger

Atwater? Tremendous. Except I fired him last week--

The intercom buzzes fiercely.

Voice
Mr. Bumstead is waiting downstairs.

Mussburger hits the intercom.

Mussburger
Tell him I'll be right there.

He looks at Norville.

. . . Well, what is it?

Norville
I--

But Mussburger is listening to the tinny voice issuing from the phone.

Mussburger
Yeah, maybe you're the company's biggest moron. We can't use Morris, he's been with us too long, nice guy, too many friends. Matter of fact, why don't you fire him. No--scratch that; I'll fire him.

He looks up at Norville.

. . . Make it fast, make it fast.

Norville
You--

The intercom squawks.

Voice
Mr. Bumstead is getting very--

Mussburger
I'll be right there. Give him a magazine.

To Norville:

. . . What're you, a mute?

The second phone on Mussburger's desk rings.

. . . Yeah, how's the stock doing?. . . Bad, huh?

Well it's not bad enough.

Into the first phone:

. . . Look, chump, either you find me a grade A ding-dong or you can tender your key to the executive washroom.

Into the second phone:

And that goes double for you.

Into the first phone:

Ear-clay?

Into both phones:

Ood-gay!

He slams down both phones, looks at Norville.

Mussburger
This better be good. I'm in a bad mood.

Norville clears his throat.

Norville
Well, sir. I've got something for you from the mail room, but first if I could just take a minute or so from your very busy time. . .

He is nervously reaching into his mail room apron and handing a scrap of paper across the desk to Mussburger, who stares, frozen, at Norville, making no move to take the paper.

. . . to show you a, uh. . .

Norville, undaunted, holds up the paper since Mussburger will not take it. Mussburger doesn't even look at the scrap of paper; his eyes are locked on Norville's. Mussburger smolders.

. . . a little something I've been working on for the last two or three years. . .

Mussburger's burning eyes finally shift momentarily to look at the crudely drawn circle; he looks back incredulously at Norville.

. . . You know, for kids! Which is perfect for

Hudsucker--not that I claim to be any great genius; like they say, inspiration is 99% perspiration, and in my case I'd say it's at least twice that, but I gotta tell ya, Mr. Mussburger, sir, this sweet baby--

Mussburger
WAIT A MINUTE!

Sudden quiet.

With one last click the perpetual motion ball bearings obediently stop.

As Mussburger's eyes burn in on him, Norville stands mute and paralyzed.

His eyes locked on Norville's, Mussburger circles the desk. He stands toe-to-toe with Norville.

He thrusts his face into Norville's, whose head moves reflexively back. Mussburger's nose is almost touching Norville's. Mussburger's eyes are burning, searching, studying, evaluating.

Finally he draws his head back.

Mussburger
Hmmmm. . .

With one hand he thrusts his cigar into Norville's gaping mouth. With his other hand he raises Norville's chin so that his teeth clench it.

Mussburger
Umm-hmm. . .

He steps back, eyes still on Norville.

He jerks his thumb over his shoulder, indicating his chair behind the desk.

Mussburger
Sit down.

Norville, his lips puckered around the unaccustomed cigar, looks bemusedly from the chair to Mussburger.

. . . Go ahead. Try it on.

Norville obeys, reluctantly, stiffly.

. . . Put your feet up.

Norville is again reluctant.

. . . Go ahead.

Norville obeys. Mussburger studies.

Hmmmm. . . . Let's get to know one another, shall we?

Norville's eyes squint against the cigar smoke wreathing from between his teeth. Mussburger seems to relax.

. . . Let's chat!

He beams.

. . . Man to man!

Norville beams.

. . . You weren't blessed with much. . .

He waves vaguely towards his head and searches for a euphemism.

. . . education, were you?

Norville
Well, I'm a college graduate--

Mussburger
All right, but you didn't excel in your studies. . . ?

Norville
Well, I made the dean's list.

Mussburger
Hmmm.

Norville sputters out some more cigar smoke.

Norville
At the Muncie College of Business Administration.

Mussburger
(relieved)
Good. Good. And did your classmates there call you "jerk" or. . .

He searches.

. . . "schmoe"?

Norville shakes his head.

. . . "Shnook"? "Dope"? "Dipstick"? "Lamebrain"?

Norville
No, sir.

Mussburger
Not even behind your back?

Norville
Sir! They voted me most likely to succeed!

Mussburger
(curtly)
You're fired.

Norville
But, sir!--

Mussburger
Get your feet off that desk.

As he struggles to comply:

Norville
But--

Mussburger
Get out of my sight.

As he tries awkwardly to get his feet off the desk, one foot knocks over an inkwell that glug-glugs out onto a stack of papers.

Mussburger
My God! The Bumstead Contracts!!

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

Norville tries to mop up the ink with some of the unstained pages. Mussburger is slapping his hands away.

Mussburger
You nitwit! I worked for three years on this deal! Get UP!

Still struggling with his feet-up posture, Norville quickly frees one hand by discarding his cigar. It lands in a wastebasket behind the desk, the contents of which immediately ignite.

Norville reaches up for leverage to help himself to his feet. He grabs Mussburger's tie, which dangles over the desktop as Mussburger leans over it.

Norville pulls. Hard.

Mussburger is yanked down onto the desktop.

Mussburger
You knucklehead!

His shirt front is covered with black ink; a couple pages of the Bumstead Contract have stuck onto the shirt with the ink.

Norville has finally gotten to his feet and is helpfully trying to wipe the Bumstead pages off Mussburger's chest--but is succeeding only in further smearing the ink.

As Mussburger slaps his hands away, Norville notices the flames leaping out of the wastebasket on his side of the desk.

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

He furiously stomps on the flames and--his foot sticks in the wastebasket. Further stomping only makes the flaming wastebasket roar up and down with his foot.

Mussburger has not yet seen the fire.

Mussburger
Out of here! OUT!

Norville has dropped to the floor, trying to wrench the flaming wastebasket off his leg.

Mussburger
Up on your feet! We don't crawl at Hudsucker Industries!

Norville
Sir, my leg is on fire!

Norville finally succeeds in getting the flaming wastebasket off his foot. Now the problem is what to do

with it.

Mussburger
Get out of my office!

Norville runs over to throw open a window.

. . . Not that way you imbecile! Through the door!

Norville picks up the flaming trash receptacle.

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

He winds up and throws it--through the closed window flanking the one he's just opened. The glass shatters and the flaming basket plummets to oblivion.

With the picture window broken a ferocious draft roars through the penthouse office.

CLOSE SHOT BUMSTEAD CONTRACTS

On the desk. The pages are sucked away by the draft.

Mussburger
My God! The Bumstead Contracts!

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

Mussburger lunges for the contracts as they are sucked out the window.

He runs, jumps onto the sill, grabs--his fist clenches around one wafting page--he is about to fall--

Mussburger
EEEEEAAAAAHHHH!

CUT TO:
INT EXECUTIVE WAITING ROOM

Bumstead, a short, fat, heavily perspiring executive, is screaming at an offscreen secretary. He holds a pot of coffee in one hand and a copy of Boy's Life in the other.

Bumstead
No magazine. No coffee. MUSSBURGER! I wanna

see MUSSBURGER! Or did he jump out a window, too?!!

In the window behind him we see loose sheets of paper fluttering down.

CUT TO:
NORVILLE

Desperately hanging onto Mussburger by his legs.

Norville
Don't worry Mr. Mussburger! I gotcha. I gotcha by your pants!

Mussburger's screaming abruptly stops.

CLOSE UP

Mussburger's horror-stricken face. REMEMBERING (the screen goes watery):

Mussburger is in a basement tailor shop. Luigi, an old Italian tailor, is just running his tape up Mussburger's inseam.

Luigi
Meester Moosaburger I give-a you pants a nice-a dooble stitch. Make 'em strong, and they look-a real sharp.

Mussburger
(barking)
No! Single stitch is fine.

Luigi
(begging)
But please-a Meester Moosaburger, the dooble stitch she last-a forever--

Mussburger
Why on earth would I need a double stitch? To pad your bill? Single stitch is fine!

CUT BACK TO:
CLOSE UP OF PANICKED MUSSBURGER

Mussburger
Damn!

We hear a loud tearing sound offscreen. Mussburger drops a few inches.

QUICK WIPE TO:
LUIGI AT HIS SEWING MACHINE

Luigi
(musing to himself)
What the heck. Meester Moosaburger sooch a nice-a guy, I give him dooble steech-a anyway. Assa some-a strong-a steech-a, you bet!

BACK TO MUSSBURGER'S PANTS

The tearing fabric abruptly catches and stops; the rest of the pants hold intact.

MUSSBURGER

sighs with relief.

He looks up.

NORVILLE

Norville's arms are wrapped around Mussburger's ankles; the heals of Mussburger's shoes are digging into his face.

MUSSBURGER

Looking. Thinking.

NORVILLE

Struggling to hold on.

MUSSBURGER

Calm. Contemplating.

Mussburger
Hmmm. . .

He absently removes a cigar from his breast pocket and sticks it in his mouth. He holds his lighter under the

cigar, not noticing that the flame is pointing the wrong way.

He looks at Norville.

NORVILLE

His face drawn with effort, still struggling to hang on. A PULL BACK from the EXTREME CLOSE SHOT reveals, however, that Norville's arms are now wrapped around--emptiness. Mussburger's legs are gone.

Norville throws his head back and laughs, it seems, insanely--but CONTINUED PULL BACK reveals that Norville is merely pantomiming the adventure for the benefit of the board members, including Mussburger. All stand around Mussburger's office, laughing gaily. All safe now, no harm done. This inaugurates:

THE LAUGHING MONTAGE

Montage silent but for music.

Norville is entertaining the board with his depiction of the near-disaster. Mussburger is slapping him merrily on the back.

CLOSE SHOT BOARD MEMBER LAUGHING

ANOTHER BOARD MEMBER LAUGHING

MUSSBURGER LAUGHING

NORVILLE LAUGHING

FREZZE FRAME

On Norville's laughing face.

Pull Back to reveal that the frozen picture is the newspaper photo on the front page of the Wall Street Informer. Its headline reads: UNTRIED YOUTH TO HELM HUDSUCKER. The subhead reads: Stockholders Wary. The sub-subhead reads: Meteoric Rise from Mailroom.

The article is under the byline of Amy Archer.

CONTINUED PULL BACK reveals that we are looking at the newspaper over someone's shoulder. The person swivels

around and away--his face now to us, we see that it is Norville looking at the newspaper. He throws his head back and laughs merrily.

As he laughs--THWOCK--a steaming towel is thrown onto his face and he continues to swivel. CONTINUED PULL BACK reveals that he is in a barber chair.

His head drops back and out of frame as the swiveling chair is cranked down, but immediately--still spinning--

--his head reappears as the chair is cranked up again. Still laughing, Norville is now freshly shaven and has a slicked-back haircut, heavy with pomade.

FREEZE

On Norville's laughing face.

PULL BACK to reveal it is another front page photo next to the headline: HUD STOCK DIPS. Subhead: JUST HOW GOOD IS HE?

CONTINUED PULL BACK reveals that the paper is lying on a chair. Norville's mailroom apron is tossed onto the chair to cover it.

PAN to where the apron was tossed from. Norville stands on a tailor's stage, laughing, as the tailor, also laughing, takes his measurements. Norville in shirtsleeves, boxer shorts, hose stockings and garters.

THE TAILOR rises, laughing merrily, throwing up his arms and spreading them wide with hands stretching the measuring tape.

Norville laughs merrily and also throws his arms up wide.

A BOARD MEMBER laughs merrily, his arms thrown wide, ticker-tape stretching between his hands. He joyously tosses away the ticker-tape.

THE FLOOR where the ticker-tape lands on a pile of previously discharged tape.

PAN-UP to reveal that the ticker-tape continues to burp its disastrous tale of good news for the board.

PAN UP FURTHER to reveal that the machine is in MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE. At the far end of the room, behind his desk, Mussburger laughs as he looks at a newspaper. TRACK IN towards him.

On his desk the perpetual ball-bearings swing; outside his window the sweep second hand of the Hudsucker clock rumbles by, sweeping a shadow across the floor. Evil prevails.

As Mussburger opens the newspaper, the CONTINUED TRACK IN shows its front page headline: Hud Board to Street: GIVE MAN FROM MUNCIE A CHANCE. Subhead: Has Fresh Ideas.

TRACK IN on the front page photo: Norville laughing, his chin propped in his hand.

THE PHOTOGRAPH COMES TO LIFE and Norville unfreezes, laughing.

We are now TRACKING BACK from him. He sits behind a huge oak desk, newly coiffed and tailored. The brass plaque on the desk confirms that he is in the OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT.

TRACK BACK continues through the large elegant office, leaving Norville looking quite small in long shot. His laughter echoes in the bright bare office.

Norville's laughter is just winding down, leaving him exhausted, as if he has been laughing nonstop for several days. He finally sighs and wipes a tear from his eye.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

NEW YORK SKYLINE DAY

In the skyline we can see the Hudsucker building topped by the Hudsucker Clock.

A cigar enters frame in the foreground, then the face of the man smoking it. Staring contemplatively at the Hudsucker Building, he takes a puff from the cigar and then plucks it from his mouth and waves it, as if painting a headline.

Editor
"Idea Man". "The Einstein of Enterprise". "The Edison of Industry". "The Billion-Dollar Cranium". . . "Idea Man".

Exploding:

And not one of you mugs has given me a story on

him!!

REVERSE

shows the editor's glassed-in office filled with reporters for the staff meeting. Although they listen quietly, they are more bored than attentive.

Through the glass walls we can see the furious activity of an army of reporters, editors, and copy boys waging the never-ending battle to put out a quality daily newspaper.

The editor slams a newspaper down onto his desk in disgust.

Editor (cont'd)
Facts, figures, charts! They never sold a newspaper! I read this morning's edition of the Informer and let me tell you something: I'd wrap a fish in it! I'd use it as a kindling! Hell, I'd even train my poodle with it if he wasn't a French poodle and more partial to the pages of Paree Soir! But I sure wouldn't shell out a hard-earned nickel to read the dad-blamed thing!

Reporter
Come on, Chief, give us a break.

Editor
Suuuure, Tibbs, take a break! Go to Florida! Lie in the sun, wait for a coconut to drop, file a story on it--it'll be more interesting than your piece on the Commie grain surplus! The Human Angle! That's what sells papers! We need a front page with heart and the whole idea of the "Idea Man" idea can put it there!

Reporter #2
Chief, if we had more access--

Editor
Yeah, and if a frog had wings he wouldn't bump his ass a-hoppin'! I don't want excuses, I want results!

WHACK!--

Without even looking at it the editor has slammed down the lid of the cigar box on his desk, towards which one reporter's hand had been cautiously reaching.

The reporter jerks his fingers away as the editor spares

the briefest moment to glare at him.

Editor
I wanna know what makes the Idea Man tick! Where is he from? Where is he going? I wanna know everything about this guy! Has he got a girl? Has he got parents?

Reporter #3
Everybody has parents.

Editor
All right, how many? How 'bout it, Parkinson, you've been awful quiet over there.

Parkinson
Uhhh. . .

Reporter Next To Him
Still waters run deep, Chief.

Editor
The only thing that runs deep with Parkinson is the holes in his ears. Yes, the Idea Man! What're his hopes and dreams, his desires and aspirations? Does he think all the time or does he set aside a certain portion of the day? How tall is he and what's his shoe size? Where does he sleep and what does he eat for breakfast? Does he put jam on his toast or doesn't he put jam on his toast and if not why not and since when?

He thrusts his face into that of the reporter.

. . . Well?!

No answer.

. . . Ahh, you're useless. Yes, Idea Man! Creator! Innovator! Cerebrator! Tycoon!--

Woman's Voice
Fake.

Editor
Huhh!!

THE WOMAN

Star reporter Amy Archer--attractive, smartly dressed.

Amy
I tell ya the guy's a phony.

Editor
Phoney, huh?

Amy
As a three-dollar bill.

Editor
Sez who?

Amy
Sez me! Why is he an Idea Man--because Hudsucker says he is? What're his ideas? Why won't they let anyone interview him?. . .

One reporter is leaning into another to keep his voice low:

Reporter
Five bucks says she mentions her Pulitzer.

The Other Reporter
Again? You're on.

Amy (cont'd)
(as she picks up the morning paper)
. . . And just take a look at the mug on this guy--the jutting eyebrows, the simian forehead, the idiotic grin. Why he has a face only a mother could love--

WHACK! The editor has again slammed down the cigar box lid but:

Amy, smiling, raises a cigar into frame, having beat the lid slam. She tosses the cigar to the reporter who tried for it earlier.

. . . On payday! The only story here is how this guy made a monkey out of <u>you</u>, Al.

Editor
Yeah, well, monkey or not I'm still editor of this rag. Amy, I thought you were doing that piece on the FBI--J. Edgar Hoover: When Will He Marry?.

Amy
I filed it yesterday.

Editor
Well, do a follow up: Hoover: Hero or Mama's Boy? The rest of you bums get up off your brains and get me that Idea Man story!

Reporters
All right, Chief. . . We'll do our best, Chief. . . I'll give it a shot, Chief. . .

Amy
(at the door)
Al, he's the bunk.

SLAM!

One of the wagering reporters grins at the other, who is taking out a five dollar bill.

The door suddenly opens again and Amy sticks her head in.

Amy
I'll stake my Pulitzer on it!

CUT TO:
ELEVATOR DOORS SWEEPING OPEN

To reveal the learing face of BUZZ, the elevator gnat.

Buzz
Say buddy! Where'd ya get the new duds?

Norville is entering the elevator in his new executive outfit.

. . . and say buddy! How'd old bucketbutt like his blue letter? Na-ha-ha-ha-ha! Did he bust a gut? Did he die? Did he--Well, hello, Mr. Mussburger, sir. . .

Buzz is instant decorum as Mussburger enters the elevator.

. . . How're you this fine morining, sir?

Norville has been worriedly patting at his pockets since the mention of the blue letter.

Norville
That reminds me, Mr. Mu. . . uh, Sid. I never did give you that--

Mussburger

(to Buzz)
Lobby. We haven't got all day.

Buzz
Right away, Mr. Mussburger sir.

As he talks, Mussburger pats at his suit pocket, takes out a cigar, inspects it.

Mussburger
Well I'm starved. I understand it'll be quite an affair this afternoon, and the executive roast Tom turkey at the Polo Club redefines the word superb.

He puts the cigar in his mouth and Buzz's hand is right there with a lighter.

Buzz
My pleasure, sir.

Norville
Roast Tom turkey. Gee, I'm hungry too--

Mussburger
Fine, fine. . .

The elevator doors open.

Buzz
It's been a pleasure serving you, Mr. Mussburger.

Buzz turns to Norville. He is puzzled but trying to hide it:

. . . and it's been a pleasure serving you too, uh. . . buddy.

Mr. Mussburger is already striding through the lobby; Norville has to lope to catch up.

Norville
Say Mr. Muss--uh Sid! Shouldn't we be a little bit concerned with the downward spiral of our stock these last few days? I mean, you're the expert and all, but at the Muncie College of Business Administration they told us--

Mussburger gives an artificially hearty laugh and claps Norville on the shoulder.

Mussburger

Relax, Norville. It's only natural in a period of transition for the more timid element to run for cover.

Norville
Okay, Sid. Like I said, you're the expert, but--

EXT SIDEWALK

Norville is still loping behind Mussburger, trying to keep up with his long strides.

Norville
. . . you don't happen to remember the plan I outlined to you the day I set fire to your off-- uh, the day I was promoted?

Mussburger
I do remember and I was impressed. Anyway, that's all forgotten now. Taxi!

Norville
Thank you, Sid, but the reason I mention it is, it would require such a small capital investment, and again, you're the expert here--

Mussburger
Taxi!

Norville
--and there's such an enormous potential profit-wise given the demographics--baby boom-- discretionary income in the burgeoning middle class--

Mussburger
Goddamn gypsy cabs--TAXI!

Norville
--so if you think it's appropriate, I'd like to bounce the idea off a few people at lunch--

As a taxi pulls up:

Mussburger
Sure, sure, tell whoever you want. . .

Mussburger is getting into the cab and, to Norville's surprise, slamming the door shut behind him.

. . . and I'd like to hear more about it at some

point, too.

SCREEEECH--the cab pulls away. Norville is left talking to himself on the empty sidewalk.

Norville
But Sid, I thought you and I were. . .

Doorman
Say bud, could you keep the sidewalk clear here?

Norville
But I'm the president of this--aww, forget it!

CUT TO:
INT COFFEE SHOP

A cheap coffee shop a half-flight down from the street. We are looking across an elbow of the coffee shop counter. In the middle background Norville sits dejectedly stirring a cup of coffee.

Behind him, through the window wells, we see the back-and-forth feet of pedestrians bustling by on the sidewalk.

In the extreme foreground sit two steaming mugs of coffee. They belong to two veterans of the coffee shop who, from offscreen, narrate the scene.

Veteran One
I got gas, Bennie.

Veteran Two
Yeah, tell me about it.

One
No kiddin', Bennie. I got gas.

Two
Ya get the special?

One
Fah from it. . .

He gives a low whistle under his breath as a woman enters from the street and hesitates by the door, looking around. Still attracive but looking somewhat down-at-the-heels, it is Amy Archer.

. . . Enter the dame.

Two
There's one in every story.

One
Ten bucks says she's looking for a handout.

Two
Twenty bucks says not here she don't find one.

One
She's looking for her mark.

The woman's eyes settle on Norville, and she heads for the empty stool next to his.

Two
She finds him.

One
She sits down.

The woman says something to the counter waitress, who exits.

Two
. . . and awduhs a light lunch.

One
She looks in her purse. . .

She is holding her wallet upside down.

Two
. . . No money.

One
The mark notices.

Beat. Norville, however, is not noticing: he is staring intently at his coffee spoon, his hat pushed back on his head, his other hand propping up a cheekbone; the woman's presence does not seem to have registered yet.

Two
. . . He's not noticing, Benny.

One
Maybe he's wise.

Two
He don't look wise.

One
Plan two: Here come the waterworks.

The woman starts crying.

Two
Yellowstone.

One
Old Faithful.

Two
Hello Niagara.

One
He notices.

As the woman cries, she accidently-on-purpose jostles Norville and he finally does indeed notice.

Two
He's concerned.

The woman mouths words at Norville who reacts sympathetically and waves his hands at the waitress.

One
She explains her perdicament, and. . .

One and Two in Unison
. . . entuh the light lunch.

The waitress is entering to set a plate in front of the woman.

The woman continues to talk to Norville, smiling wanly at him.

Two
She's got other problems, of course. . .

One
. . . her mother needs an operation. . .

Two
. . . adenoids.

One
No, Bennie: Lumbago.

Veteran One's enunciation of "lumbago" falls into perfect

sync with the woman's moving lips.

Norville is listening sympathetically, but he suddenly notices his watch.

One
(alarmed)
She's losing him, Bennie.

Norville is rising to his feet.

Two
Maybe he's wise.

One
He don't look wise.

As Norville turns to leave:

Two
How does she pull this out?

She puts the back of her hand dramatically to her forehead.

Disbelieving:

One
She isn't!

Thrilled:

Two
She is!

And indeed she does: faint dead away, falling backwards on the stool, so that Norville has no choice but to catch her.

Norville holds her awkwardly, looking around for help.

One
She's good, Bennie.

Two
She's damn good, Lou.

A waitress enters extreme foreground to block our view of the swooned woman and the embarrassed Norville. The waitress is facing the camera and the two offscreen veterans; the cropping gives us only her torso and the steaming pot of coffee she holds.

Waitress
(bored, nasal voice)

Can I get you boys anything else?

REVERSE

Back of the waitress's torso in foreground; on either side beyond her the two veterans are looking up at her offscreen face. They sport extremely bored expressions, topped by "Cabbie" caps.

One

Bromo

Beat.

Two

. . . Bromo.

INT NORVILLE'S OFFICE

Looking at its frosted-glass door; the sign-painter is just finishing lettering in: NORVILLE BARNES
President

The sign-painter makes way as we see Norville's shadow approaching; even from inside the room we can hear that he is wheezing heavily. He is apparently carrying the girl, cradled in his arms. He tries to reach down to get the doorknob; can't manage it; turns to press his back against the door and get the knob with his other hand.

The door opens as Norville swings around to enter. He is wheezing like a gas pipe about to explode.

He swings around to kick the door shut. We see that the lettering on the door is now terribly smudged; we also see, in wet ink, on the seat of Norville's pants:
senraB ellivroN
tnediserP

Weakly, still cradled in Norville's arms:

Amy
I'm sorry we had to take the stairs. It was just that horrible little elevator boy. . .

Norville
Not at all. You're light as a feather.

Pointing langorously:

Amy
The couch, please.

Still wheezing horribly, Norville staggers over to the couch and deposits her gently on it. He straightens up and looks at her.

NORVILLE'S POV

Amy is smiling wanly at the camera. The entire image pulsates as the blood pounds behind Norville's eyeballs. We hear the loud rasping of his breath resonating inside his head. Amy is talking but her voice is barely audible, as if coming from a long way away.

Norville
Just a minute.

He perches drunkenly on the edge of the couch and puts his head between his knees, still fighting for breath.

Amy
I don't know what came over me. I suppose it was the shock of eating after so long without; the enzymes kicking in after so long, or whatever. But then you couldn't possibly know what it is to be tired and hungry. . .

Speaking into his knees as he wheezes:

Norville
Hungry, anyway.

Amy
I don't want to bore you with all the sordid details of my life; it's not a happy story. . .

Norville rises and starts putting throw pillows behind her head.

. . . Suffice it to say that I'm jobless--though not for want of trying, that I'm friendless, with no one to--thank you--take care of me; and that had you not come along at just exactly the moment that you did--

She screams, staring down at the couch.

Norville jumps, startled, then looks where she is looking.

On the white sofa cushion where he had been sitting is

printed, in wet ink, right side around: NORVILLE BARNES
President

Amy
Norville, I didn't know you were president here!

Norville stares dumbfounded at the sofa cushion. When the nickle finally drops, he spins around to try to look at the seat of his pants.

Distracted but still modest:

Norville
Oh, it's nothing really. Just determination and hard work. . .

He unbuckles his trousers.

. . . Of course, when I started in the mail room last Tuesday I thought it might take more time--

Buzz enters holding a brown paper bag.

Buzz
Say, buddy, here's the whiskey you asked f--

He freezes, taking in the scene: Amy reclining on the couch; Norville standing in front of her with his pants around his ankles, still breathing heavily; the bottle of whiskey in his own hand.

Norville
(flustered)
Thank you, Buzz, just leave it on the desk.

Leering:

Buzz
Happy days, buddy. . .

As he turns to leave:

. . . and I'll tell your secretary you're not to be disturbed. Yowzuh!!

He snaps the elastic strap under his chin.

After the doors shut behind Buzz:

Amy
(shuddering)
What a horrible little person.

Norville
Oh, Buzz is pretty harmless, really--

Amy
At any rate I arrived in town not ten days ago, full of dreams and aspirations, anxious to make my way in the world--

Norville pours her a glass of whiskey and brings it over to her.

A little naive perhaps but--thank you--armed with determination, a solid work ethic, and an indomitable belief in the future--

Norville
I myself--

He crosses back to the desk.

Amy
Only to have that belief, that unsullied optimism, dashed against the marble and mortar of the modern work place--

Norville takes a cigarette from a large wood cigarette box on the desk and sticks it in his mouth.

Norville
Cigarette?

Amy
No thank you. Seek and ye shall find, work and ye shall prosper--these were the watchwords of my education, the ethos of my tender years--

OVER NORVILLE'S SHOULDER

He has been pushing the box towards her. The box tilts lazily forward and then disappears over the far lip of the desk. We hear the thud of the box landing amid the pitter-patter of cigarettes raining onto the carpet.

Amy's brow crinkles. Continuing:

--these were the values that were instilled in me while I was growing up in a little town you've probably never heard of--

Norville
Mind if I join you?

He is pouring himself a drink.

Amy
Be my guest. A little town you've probably--

He tosses back his drink, gags, looks at Amy with his eyes bulging.

HIS POV

Once again her image pulsates. There is a roaring sound and an airy steam whistle as she silently moves her lips.

NORVILLE

He waves his arms and talks with a thick rasp as he staggers to his feet.

Norville
Excuse me--I--executive washroom. . .

He staggers out a side door.

On his exit Amy leaps to her feet and scurries over to his desk. At the top of her voice:

Amy
Are you all right?. . .

She throws open the top desk drawer. Inside two lonely lead pencils roll through an otherwise empty drawer.

Amy expertly flips a cigarette into her mouth and strikes a match off the desktop.

. . . Is it your lunch? The chicken a la king?

From the washroom:

Norville
No, I--

Amy throws open another drawer, empty except for an appointment book. As she hurriedly flips through page after blank page an arctic wind whistles emptiness. One page only has a notation: 11:45. Address Wilkie Grammar School Junior Achievers Club.

Amy

Is the a la king repeating on you?

Amy shoves the appointment book back into the drawer.

Norville
. . . I'm fine, I. . . You were saying?

She mutters:

Amy
Values. . watchwords. . . uh, tender years. . .

Aloud:

--A little town you've probably never heard of. . .

She hastily stubs out her cigarette and waves her hand to disperse the smoke.

. . . Muncie, Indiana.

She scurries back across the room as we hear the faucet being turned off; she restrikes her languid pose on the couch just as the washroom door opens.

Norville gapes, one hand pressing a dripping rag to his forehead.

Norville
You're from Muncie?!

Amy
Why yes, do you know it?

Norville starts making pumping motions with his fists and loud syncopated grunting noises. Amy gapes at him.

He starts singing, off-key:

Norville
Fight on fight on dear old Muncie,
Fight on--Hoist the gold and blue,
You'll be tattered, torn and hurtin'
Once "The Munce" is done with you!

Amy lamely fakes singing along, coming in louder on the last, obvious rhyme. Norville jumps an octave on it; she quickly follows suit, also pumping her fists.

As Norville crosses his hands and locks thumbs in front of his nose to make bird wings of his extended fingers--

. . . GoooooOOO EAGLES!

--Amy awkwardly immitates.

Norville excitedly sits behind his desk.

. . . A Muncie girl! Talk about the cat's pyjamas! Tell you what, Amy. I'm gonna cancel the rest of my appointments this afternoon and get you a job here at the Hud.

Amy
Oh, no, really, I--

Norville
Don't bother to thank me, it's the easiest thing in the world. Matter of fact, I know where a vacancy just came up.

He hits the intercom.

. . . Mail room.

To Amy:

. . . This'll only take a moment.

Intercom Voice
Yeah?

Norville
Good afternoon to ya, this is Norville Barnes--

Voice
Barnes! Where the hell have you been! And where's my voucher?!

Norville thumps at his pockets.

Norville
. . . Well, I'm not sure where I--

Voice
I need that voucher! I told you a week ago it was important!

Norville
But, look, I'm president of the company now and I--

Voice
I don't care if you're president of the company!

I need that voucher! Now!

Click. The intercom goes dead.

Norville
Oh, of all the foolish. . . Listen, do you take shorthand? Are you familiar with the mimeograph machine?

Amy
Well of course--I went to the Muncie, uh, Secretarial Polytechnic!

Norville
Well you can be my--we'll put you in here with--I'm gonna need a--as soon as my duties start, uh--

He excitedly smacks a fist into a palm.

--A Muncie girl! Can you beat that!

Amy
Well I just don't know how to thank you--

Norville digs into his pocket and takes out his wallet.

Norville
And look, I've got thirteen dollars, why don't you take ten--

Amy
Well I don't know if--

Norville
Sure, just a loan--tide yourself over, food, some new clothes--A Muncie girl!

Amy
Well thank you for everything, Mr. Barnes--

Norville
Please! Norville!

As he reaches to shake:

. . . It's my pleasure!

She reaches for his hand but Norville snatches it away and, winking at her, hooks thumbs in front of his nose and makes wings of his fingers.

. . . GoooOOOO EAGLES!

Amy likewise hooks her thumbs in front of her nose, makes wings, and, winking back:

Amy
GoooooOOOO EAGLES!

But we pull back to reveal that the girl is now in a newspaper office, demonstrating the fight sign to SMITTY, a reporter wearing a fedora with a bent-back brim. Smitty howls with laughter.

Smitty
(wheezing)
. . . Once "The Munce". . . Holy. . .

Amy sits down behind a typewriter and, as she starts typing at 80 words per minute:

Amy
And is this guy from chumpsville?! I pulled the old mother routine--

Smitty
Adenoids?

Amy
Lumbago.

Behind her an ancient man wearing an inksman's visor and sleeve garters toils over a large checkerboarded surface over which he shuffles letter blocks and black spaces.

Smitty gives a low whistle.

Smitty
That gag's got whiskers on it!

The phone rings and Smitty reaches for it.

Amy
I'm telling you, Smitty, the board of Hudsucker is up to something--

Smitty
(into phone)
Yeah.

Ancient Puzzler
Say Amy, what's a six-letter word for an affliction of the hypothalmus?

Without a break in her typing:

Amy
--And it's a cinch--Goiter--it's a cinch this guy isn't in on it. How much time to make the Late Final?

Smitty holds the phone away from his ear.

Smitty
Chief.

Still typing, Amy whistles and nods to her shoulder. Smitty tucks the phone into it as she continues typing.

Amy
Hiya Chief, just the person I wanted to apologize to. . .

Smitty is looking at his watch.

Smitty
About seven minutes.

Amy
(still typing)
Yeah, I was all wet about your idea man. . . Well thanks for being so generous. . . It <u>is</u> human, and you <u>are</u> divine. . . No, he's no faker. He's the 100% real McCoy beware-of-imitations genuine article: the guy is a real moron--

To the Ancient Puzzler:

--as in a five-letter word for imbecile--

Back into phone:

--as pure a specimen as I've ever run across. . . Am I sure he's a nitwit? Heck, if working at the informer doesn't make me an expert then my name isn't Amy Archer and I've never won the Pulitzer Prize. . .

Her eyes narrow.

. . . In 1957. . . My series on the reunited triplets--come on down here, hammerhead, and I'll show it to ya. . .

Ancient Puzzler
Amy, what's a three-letter word for a flightless

bird?

Amy
Not now, Morris, I'm busy.--That's right, I said hammerhead, as in a ten-letter word for a smug bullying self-important newspaperman--

To Morris:

--Gnu--

Into phone:

--who couldn't find--

To Morris:

--that's G-N-U--

Into phone:

--couldn't find the Empire State Building with a compass, a road map and a native guide.

To Morris:

--or emu.

She slams down the phone. To Smitty:

. . . And that's just the potatos, Smitty, here comes the gravy: The chump really likes me. A Muncie girl!

Smitty bursts out laughing.

Smitty
Better off falling for a rattlesnake.

As she continues to type:

Amy
I'm tellin' ya, this guy's just the patsy and I'm gonna find out what for. There's a real story here, Smitty, some kind of plot, a set-up, a cabal, a--oh, and say did I tell ya?!

Smitty
He didn't offer you money.

Amy
A sawbuck!

Smitty
Ten bucks? Let's grab a highball!

Amy
On Norville Barnes!

She rips the page out of the typewriter, swivels in her chair to face camera as we track in close and she hollers:

. . . COPY!

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

PRESSES ROLLING churning out great quantities of newsprint.

PAPERS PILING UP one on top of the other, very many, very quickly.

DELIVERY MAN throwing a baled stack of papers off the back of his truck.

BALED PAPER rolling into the foreground. A hand enters frame to snip its wires and wipe off the top paper.

PAPER BOY wearing an apron and a little paper boy cap, mouthing "Extra! Extra!" as he holds one of the papers aloft.

PAN UP HIS ARM to the newspaper and, beyond it, the towering Hudsucker Building.

ALL OF THE ABOVE DISSOLVING WITH:

NEWSPAPER SPINNING TOWARDS THE CAMERA and STOPPING FULL FRAME. Its headline, over a picture of Norville smiling, is IMBECILE HEADS HUDSUCKER. The subheadline: Not a Brain in his Head.

The newspaper is angrily slammed down to reveal that Norville has been reading the inside.

His face twisting with fury, he leans forward and hits the intercom.

Norville
Miss Smith, can you come in please to take a letter. . .

Muttering to himself:

. . . of all the cockamamie. . .

Amy is bustling in holding a steno pad and a pencil. As she seats herself in front of his desk, he rises to pace behind it.

. . . Did you happen to see the front page of today's Informer?

Amy
Well, I. . . didn't bother to read the article. I didn't think the picture did you justice.

Norville
The picture was fine! It's what that knuckle-headed dame wrote underneath! Of all the irresponsible. . . Amy, take this down: Dear Miss Archer. I call you "Miss" because you seem to have "missed" the boat completely on this one! How on earth would you know whether I'm an imbecile when you don't even have the guts to come in here and interview me man to man! No, change "guts" to "courage". No, make it "common decency". These wild speculations about my intelligence--

Amy
--or lack thereof?

Norville
(nodding)
--these preposterous inventions, would be better suited to the pages of Amazing Tales Magazine. If the editors of the Informer see fit to publish the rantings of a disordered mind, perhaps they will see fit to publish <u>this</u> letter! But I doubt it. I most seriously doubt it. As I doubt also that you could find a home at Amazing Tales, a periodical which I have enjoyed for many years. Yours sincerely, et cetera.

He drifts into thought.

Amy
Is that all, Mr. Barnes?

Norville
. . . Well <u>you</u> know me, Amy, at least better than that that dame does. Do <u>you</u> think I'm an imbecile?

Amy
I'm sure I--

Norville
Go on, tell the truth; I trust you and I put a lot of stock in your opinion.

Amy
Well, I--

Norville
Oh sure, you're biased--you're a fellow Muncian. But would an imbecile come up with this?

He whips the cover sheet off a display pad resting on an easel to reveal a large piece of graph paper with a circle rendered onto it.

Amy looks, puzzled, from the circle to Norville's proudly beaming face.

. . . I designed it myself and this is just the sweet baby that can put Hudsucker right back on top again.

Amy
. . . Uh-huh.

Norville
You know! For kids!

Amy
Why don't I just type up this letter. . .

Norville
Aww, naw Amy, that won't be necessary. I shouldn't send it; she's just doing her job, I guess.

Amy
Well, I don't know; maybe she does deserve it. Maybe she <u>should've</u> come in to face you man to man.

Norville
Well, she probably had a deadline. . .

Amy
Sure, but--she could still have gotten your side, for the record!

Norville
Well, it's done now--what's the use of grousing about it. Forget the letter, Amy, I just had to blow off some steam...

She gets up to leave.

As she is heading for the door:

Norville
. . . She's probably just a little confused.

Amy turns at the door.

Amy
Confused?

Norville
Yeah, you know, probably one of these fast-talking career gals, thinks she's one of the boys. Probably <u>is</u> one of the boys, if you know what I mean.

Amy
(through clenched teeth)
I'm quite sure I <u>don't</u> know what you mean.

Norville
Yeah, sure. Suffers from one of these complexes they have nowadays. Seems pretty obvious, doesn't it? She's probably very unattractive and bitter about it.

Amy
Oh, is <u>that</u> it!

Norville
Yeah, you know. Probably dresses in men's clothing, swaps drinks with the guys at the local watering hole and hobnobs with some smooth-talking heel in the newsroom named Biff or Smoocher or. . .

Amy
Smitty.

Norville
Exactly. And I bet she's ugly. Real ugly. Otherwise, why wouldn't they print her picture next to her byline?

Amy

Maybe she puts her professionalism ahead of her personal appearance.

Norville
I bet that's exactly what she tells herself! But you and I both know she's just a dried-up bitter old maid. Say, how about you and I grab a little dinner and a show after work? I was thinking maybe "The King and I"--

WHAP! Amy slaps him.

He stares.

. . . How about "Oklahoma"?

As she stalks out of the office:

Amy
Norville Barnes, you don't know a thing about that woman! You don't know who she really is! And only a numbskull thinks he knows things about things he knows nothing about!

He stares, rubbing his cheek.

Norville
Say, what gives?

A WHISTLE

Shrieking.

SWISH PAN TO:
CLOCK

Reading five o'clock.

SWISH PAN TO:
WORKERS

Rising from their desks, collecting personal effects, putting on their hats and coats.

TIME CLOCK

Busy hands punch out.

EMPTY HALLWAY

Of the executive floor. A security man walks down the hall, whistling, swinging a ring of keys. After he passes the door to the ladies' room it opens, Amy peeks out, emerges, goes into Norville's office.

NORVILLE'S OFFICE

She goes to the desk, takes out the appointment book, flips through it.

THE BOOK

Still empty except for the one date with the Wilkie Grammar School Junior Achievers Club, which now has a red line drawn across it and the notation CANCELED.

AMY

Looks around the office--notices something.

A DOOR

Set into the wall to one side, it is topped by a small plaque: AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.

Amy tries the knob, which turns, and enters.

THE ROOM

Big and dim; several stories high with spiral staircases reaching into and catwalks criss-crossing the gloom above. It is filled with contraptions, works, cogs, gears. There is no window, but on what would be the window wall there is an enormous iron ring with a metal rod sweeping an interior circle. It is the backside of the great Hudsucker Clock.

Amy gazes about. She crosses to a door opposite the one she entered from.

She stoops to peak through its keyhole.

HER POV

We are looking into Sidney J. Mussberger's office. Mussberger sits at his desk barking into a dictaphone.

Click-click-click--the perpetual motion balls on his desk are going full-tilt; THRUMMMMmmmm--the clock's exterior second hand sweeps a shadow across the office. Mussburger, it seems, never sleeps.

Mussburger
Memo. From the desk of Sidney J. Mussburger. Executive order number 530 slash A49. To: Director of the Jacksonville Facility. Copies to: Legal Affairs, Business Affairs, Central Files. Re: Movement of Raw Materials from the Huron Facility. Due to unfavorable news in the slag markets, Jacksonville inventory must be reduced by 15% with overflow diverted to the Waukegan Stamping Facility. Memo. From the desk of Sidney J. Mussburger. Executive order number 530 slash A50. To: Director of--

Voice
Watchoo doin' down they, Miss Archuh?

Amy
Huh?!

She straightens and turns.

Facing her is a very old black man in a janitor's jumpsuit with HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES/The Future Is Now emblazoned across it. We might recognize his voice as that of the narrator who opened the movie.

Amy
Who are you? How did you know who I am?

Moses
Ah speck ole Moses knows jes about everthing, leastways if it concerns Hudsuckuh.

Amy
But--who are you--what d'you do here?

Moses
Ah keeps the ol' circle turning--this ol' clock needs plenty o' care. Time is money, Miss Archuh, and money--it drives that ol' global economy and keeps big Daddy Earth a-spinnin' on 'roun. Ya see, without that capital fo'mation--

Amy
Yeah yeah. Say, you won't tell anyone about me, will you?

Moses
I don't tell no one nothin' lessen they ask. Thatches ain't ole Moses' way.

Amy
So if you know everything about Hudsucker, tell me why the Board decided to make Norville Barnes president.

Moses
Well, that even suhprised ole Moses at fust. I didn't think the board was that smart.

Amy
That smart?!

Moses
But then I figured it out: they did it 'cause they figured young Norville for an imbecile. Like some othuh people ah know.

Amy
Why on earth would they want a nitwit to be president?

Moses
'Cause they's little pigglies! They's tryin' to inspire panic, make that stock git cheap so's they can snitch it all up fo' themselves! But Norville, he's got some tricks up his sleeve, he does. . .

He draws a circle with his finger in the air.

. . . you know, fo' kids? Yeah, he's a smart-one, that Norville, heh-heh, he's a caution. Wal, some folks is square, an' some is HIP--

To punctuate, he gives a little jerk of his hips.

. . . But I guess you don't really know him any better than that board does, do ya, Miss Archuh?

Amy
Well, maybe I--

Moses
An' only some kind a knucklehead thinks she knows things 'bout things she, uh-when she don't, uh--how'd that go?

Bristling:

Amy
It's hardly the same--

Moses
Why you don't even know y'own self--you ain't exactly the genuine article are you, Miss Archuh?

Amy
Well in connection with my job, sometimes I have to go undercover as it were--

Moses
I don't mean that! Why you pretendin' to be such a hard ol' sourpuss! Ain't never gonna make you happy! Never made Warin' happy.

Amy
(uncomfortably)
I'm happy enough.

He chuckles.

Moses
Okay Miss Archuh.

He turns and walks away.

. . . I got gears to see to.

She calls after him:

Amy
I'm plenty happy!

She is answered only by the whirring machinery.

MOSES

Eslewhere in the great room, he is hunkered down next to a catchment which he buffs with a greasy rag. Amy's voice echoes up:

Amy (off)
. . . Hello?

Muttering to himself:

Moses
Them po' young folks. Looks like Norville's in fo' the same kind o' heartache ol' Warin' had.

But then, she never axed me 'bout dat. . .

As ominous music swells we:

FADE OUT

CHIEF'S OFFICE

He slams down a typescript.

Chief
I can't print this!

Amy
Why not, it's all true! The Board is using this poor guy! They're depressing the stock so they can buy it cheap!

Chief
It's pure speculation! Why, they'd have my butt in a satchel!

Smitty
(chuckling)
Ol' satchel-butt. . .

Amy
I know they're gonna buy it--

Chief
You don't know anything! Fact is they haven't bought it! The stock is cheap, Archer! What're they waiting for?

Amy
I don't know. . .

Smitty
Amy's hunches are usually pretty good, chief.

Chief
You don't accuse someone of stock manipulation on a hunch, Ignatz! The readers of the Informer aren't interested in sensationalism, gossip and unsupported speculation. Facts, figures--those are the tools of the newspaper trade! Why it's almost as if you're trying to take the heat off this Barnes numbskull--like you've gone all soft on him!

Smitty
Come on Chief, that's a low blow. Archer's not gonna go gooey for a corn-fed idiot.

Chief
All right, I was out of line. But you're out of line with this stock swindle story. Gimme some more of that Moron-from-Sheboygan stuff--

Amy
Muncie.

Chief
Whatever. That's what sells newspapers

Amy
I've got an even hotter story--The Sap from the City Desk.

Chief
Watch it, Archer--

Amy
It's about a dimwitted editor who--

Smitty
Easy Amy. . .

He gives her a companionable goose.

. . . Let's grab a highball and calm down.

She whirls and slaps him.

Amy
Back off--Smoocher!

Smitty rubs his cheek, staring as she storms off.

Smitty
Say, what gives?

AN ENGRAVED INVITATION

It reads:

Sidney J. Mussberger
President Norville Barnes
and
The Board of Hudsucker Industries

CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO
The Annual Fancy-Dress Hudsucker Christmas Party
Music, Dancing, Refreshments (Dainties)
Formal Evening Attire de Rigeuer

The music over the invitation--"We Wish You a Merry Christmas"-- segues into the dance music of the Hudsucker Chamber Orchestra.

Dancing couples fill the screen; we glide among them and finally come to follow one couple: Norville and Mrs. Mussburger, a large middle-aged woman of the Margaret Dumont mold in an elaborately flowered and old-fashioned evening gown, low-cut in spite of her overly heavy figure. She wears a large flowered hat with a rolled-up veil.

Mrs. Mussburger
--so we'd gone out to the Hamptons and the garden was in positive ruins!

Norville
That must have been quite a disappointment, Mrs. Mussburger.

Mrs. Mussburger
Disappointment? J'etais destroyee! I was in bed for a week! Positively sick with fury! I called in the gardener and said, Monsieur Gonzalez, either those azaleas come up next spring or you are terminee!

She throws her head back and roars with laughter.

THEIR FEET

As the large woman leans back to laugh, her feet stay planted on the ground and Norville's rise to be dragged with his toes scraping the floor through the continuing dance.

Mrs. Meussbuerger
I'm brushing up on my French with the most charming man, Pierre of Fifth Avenue. Do you know him?

Norville
I haven't had--

Mrs. Mussburger
Sidney and I are planning a trip to Paris and points continental.--Aren't we dear?

Mussburger has entered frame.

Mussburger
Sure, sure. I'm going to borrow Norville for a while if you don't mind, dear.

Mixing down as they leave her:

Mrs. Mussburger
Well, frankly, I. . .

Norville
You have a charming wife, Mr. Muss--uh, Sid.

Mussburger
So they tell me. Norville, let me shepherd you through some of the introductions here. Try not to talk too much; some of our biggest stockholders are, uh--scratch that: Say whatever you want.

ENTRYWAY

As Amy enters in a simple yet stunning evening gown. She looks around the room, then starts across the crowded floor towards the punch bowl.

NORVILLE

As Mussberger introduces him to a tall imposing businessman in a tuxedo and a ten gallon hat.

Mussberger
Norville Barnes, allow me to introduce Mr. Zebulon Cardozo, one of Hudsucker Industries largest and most loyal stockholders.

Ignoring Norville's proffered hand:

Cardozo
Dammit boy, what's this I hear about you bein' an embecile? What the hell is ailin' ya?! A week ago my stock was worth twice what it is now! I'm considering dumping the whole shootin' match unless I see some vast improvement! Dammit boy, it's a range war! Either you pull our wagons into a circle or I'm pullin' out of the wagon train!

Norville gives him a forced but hearty laugh of reassurance.

Norville
No need for concern, sir; it's only natural in a period of transition for the more timid element to run for cover--

Cardozo
So I'm yella, am I?!

He starts peeling off his tuxedo jacket.

. . . We'll see who's yella!!

His wife, a small wiry woman, steps in as Mussberger drags Norville away.

Mrs. Cardozo
Zebulon, you mind now and quit bein' sech an ole grizzly.

As he reluctantly starts shrugging back into the jacket:

Mr. Cardozo
Aww, I wasn't gonna hurt the boy, Lorelei. . .

MUSSBURGER AND NORVILLE

As they make their way through the room Norville is mopping at his brow with a handkerchief.

Norville
I'm sorry, Sid, I thought maybe if I showed him the long view we might--

THUMP! Dabbing at his brow, Norville has walked square into the back of a debonaire man holding a martini. The drink sloshes and the man turns testily to face him.

Mussberger
Norville, this is Thorstensen Findlandsen, who heads a radical splinter group of disgruntled investors.

Norville nervously pumps Findlandsen's hand.

Norville
Hello Mr. Findlandsen, so sorry to meet you--uh, happy to walk into y--uh, pleased to make your--

Findlandsen raises his hand to look quizzically at Norville's handkerchief which he now holds himself, apparently having been given it during the handshake.

He hands it back to Norville.

Norville
Thank you, sir. . .

He stuffs it nervously into his outside breast pocket as Finlandsen stares at him. Mussburger stands watching in the executive at-ease, hands dug into his pockets.

. . . I understand your concern about the downward, you know, but I think you'll find under our strong new leadership. . .

As Norville's hand drops from his breast pocket the handkerchief, perhaps caught on his sleeve, whips out of the pocket and follows his hand down.

Findlandsen looks down and Norville follows his look, and stoops below frame to retrieve the hanky.

Finlandsen leans quizzically forward and peers down at Norville, who continues, off:

. . . we anticipate, in short order, an upward. . .

In rapid fire Norville straightens up into--CRUNCH--Finlandsen, whose head snaps back, eyes rolling, a hand pressed to his nose, drink sloshing; Norville, one hand pressed to the back of his own head and the other wildly waving his hanky for balance, takes a staggering step forward onto the toe of an elegantly gowned

Mrs. Findlandsen
AHHH!

There is a drum roll and, as the lights dim:

AN EMCEE

grabs the large old-fashioned microphone in front of the band and grins.

Emcee
Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished members of the Hudsucker board. I give you the king of swing, the rajah of romance, the incredible, the unforgettable Mister Vic. . . Tenetta!

Vic Tenetta takes the microphone from the emcee who backs away, applauding, as Tenetta starts to croon. He is dressed in a white dinner jacket; his jet black hair sweeps out over his forehead in a roguishly pompadoured mat. One forelock droops and bounces across his forehead.

CUT TO:
SEVERAL BOARD MEMBERS

Clustered in a dim corner of the room, smoking cigars. In the background, brilliantly spotlit, we can see Vic Tenetta continuing his song.

As Mussburger joins them:

Exec One
How's it going, Mr. Mussburger?

Mussburger
Bad.

Exec Two
Good.

Mussburger
But not bad enough.

Exec Three
Too bad.

Mussburger
It could be better, it could be worse.

All Three Execs
Hmmmmmm.

Mussburger
The stock's got to drop another five points if we expect to get controlling interest. Norville tells me he's got some hot idea. Can't be good.

Exec One
Then it can't be bad!

Exec Two
Couldn't be better if it couldn't be worse.

All
Hmmmmmm.

THE TERRACE

of the penthouse where the party noise is distant, Tenetta's song just filtering out.

We are on a full shot of the back of a man who stands facing the twinkling cityscape, but in an odd leaned-back posture, with one hand reaching up to his hidden face, his other hand pressed against the small of his back.

REVERSE

Amy, having just emerged onto the terrace, squints at him.

Amy
. . . Norville?

He turns and we see that it is indeed Norville, holding a dripping icepack against one eye.

. . . What happened?

Norville
Oh. Nothing, really, just. . . the more timid investors are no longer running for cover.

Amy
Let me look.

He does.

Norville
Sid found me the icepack.

Amy
Let me hold it, or you'll have a real shiner.

Norville
Thanks. People seem to be pretty hot over this imbecile story.

Amy
. . . I'm sorry.

Norville
Oh, it isn't <u>your</u> fault, Amy. You're the one person who's been standing by me through all this.

As she rolls the pack gently across his eye:

Amy
Norville. . . there's something I have to tell you. You see, I'm not really a secretary.

Norville
I know that Amy.

Amy
. . . You do?

Norville
I understand that you're not very skilled yet in the secretarial arts. I'm not that skilled as a president. In fact I've sort of just been pretending that I know what I'm doing--except no one seems to be buying it yet.

Amy
I believe in you, Norville.--At least I believe in your. . . intentions--

Norville
Oh, I don't blame them, really. I guess I have sort of made a mess of things. These folks have to protect their investment. Most of them are very nice people--

Amy
Listen Norville, you can't trust people here like you did in Muncie.

They gaze out at the city.

. . . Certain people are--

Norville
Didja ever go to the top of Old Man Larson's feed tower and look out over the town?

Amy
. . . Huh?

Norville
You know, on farm route 17.

Amy
Oh yes! In Muncie!

Norville
No! In Vidalia--down Farm Route 17!

Amy
Uh--Yes. Seventeen. Yes, I----well no, I--I never really. . . There's a place I go now, the cutest little place near my apartment in Greenwich Village. It's called Ann's 440. It's a beatnik bar.

Norville
You don't say.

Amy
Yes, you can get carrot juice or Italian coffee, and the people there--well, none of them quite fit in. You'd love it--why don't you come there with me--they're having a marathon poetry reading on New Year's Eve. I go every year.

Norville
(puzzled)
Every year?

Amy
Well--this year--if it's good I plan to make it a tradition. I uh, my it certainly is beautiful--

She nods out at the city to avoid Norville's quizzical look.

. . . The people look like ants.

Norville
Well, the Hindus say--and the beatniks also--that in the next life some of us will come back as ants. Some will be butterflies. Others will be elephants or creatures of the sea.

Amy
What a beautiful thought.

Norville
What do you think you were in your previous life, Amy?

Amy
Oh, I don't know. Maybe I was just a fast-talking career gal who thought she was one of the boys.

Norville
Oh no, Amy, pardon me for saying so but I find that very far-fetched.

Amy
Norville there really is something I have to tell you--

Norville
That kind of person would come back as a wildebeest, or a warthog. No, I think it more likely that you were a gazelle, with long graceful legs, gamboling through the underbrush. Perhaps we met once, a chance encounter in a forest glade. I must have been an antelope or an ibex. What times we must have had--foraging together for sustenance, picking the grubs and burrs from one another's coats. Or perhaps we simply touched our horns briefly and went our separate ways. . .

Amy
I wish it were that simple, Norville. I wish I was still a gazelle, and you were an antelope or an ibex.

Norville
Well, can I at least call you deer? Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! Seriously, Amy, the whole thing is what your beatnik friends call "Karma"--the great circle of life, and rebirth.

Morosely:

Amy
Yeah, I think I've heard of that. What goes around comes around.

Norville
That's it. A great wheel that gives us each what we deserve. . .

He slaps his fist into his palm.

. . . Tomorrow's my big presentation to the board. I've gotta show Sidney and the guys that I deserve all their confidence!

Sadly:

Amy
Oh, Norville--

Norville
Kiss me once, Amy! Kiss me once for luck!

Amy
Sure, Norville, sure. . .

She gives him a peck. They look at each other.

. . . Oh Norville!

She embraces him. They kiss again.

Norville's eyes widen.

VIC TENETTA

Crooning the end of his song.

DANCING COUPLES

Turn to the bandstand and applaud.

NORVILLE AND AMY

In the midst of a passionate kiss.

FADE OUT

DOUBLE OAK DOORS

Labeled "Executive Conference Room". A secretary is hanging up a sign that reads: "Quiet Please! Board Meeting in Session."

INT BOARD ROOM

CLOSE ON NORVILLE

Chest and up. His upper torso is swaying, his shoulders rhythmically rolling as he talks. We hear a whoosh-whoosh sound from offscreen.

Norville
--so we have economy, simplicity, low production cost and the potential for mass appeal, and all that spells out great profitability. . .

CLOSE ON MUSSBURGER

Staring. Holding a just-lighted but forgotten cigar in one hand, and a still burning match in the other.

Norville (os)
. . . I had the boys down at R & D throw together this prototype so that our discussion here could have some focus. . .

THE BOARD

Staring, mouths hanging open, in arrested motion much like when Waring Hudsucker jumped out the window at the previous board meeting.

Norville (os)
. . . and to give you gentlemen of the board a first-hand look at just how exciting this gizmo is. .

WIDER ON NORVILLE

Still gyrating. We now see that he has accelerated the hula hoop around his waist to quite a good speed.

Norville
. . . It's fun, it's healthy, it's good excercise; kids'll just love it, and we put a little sand inside to make the whole experience more pleasant. And the great part is we won't have to charge an arm and a leg.

Mussburger's forgotten match has burned down to his fingertips. With a wince, he shakes it out.

The board is staring.

Elderly Exec
Yeah but. . . What is it?

Norville
Ya know. . . for kids!

Exec Two
Does it have rules?

Exec Three
Can more than one play?

Exec Four
(to three)
What makes you think it's a game?

Exec Three
Is it a game?

Exec Five
Will it break?

Exec Six
It better break eventually!

Exec Three
Are you supposed to make it fly off?

Exec two
Is there an object?

Exec Five
Does it come with batteries?

Exec Four
We could charge extra for them.

Exec Seven
Is it safe for toddlers?

Exec Three
How can you tell when you're done?

Exec Two
How do you make it stop?

Exec One
Is that a girl's model or a boy's?

Exec Three
Can a parent assemble it??

Exec Seven
What if you get tired before it's done?

Exec Six
Is there a larger model for the obese?

Exec Four
Can you do it around your neck?

Norville
There are no batteries, no accessories, it's one-size-fits-all, and this sweet baby is absolutely positively unbreakable.

Elderly Exec

Yeah, but. . .what is it?

Norville
What is it? Why it's. . . well, it's. . . it's. . .

Mussburger
It's brilliant.

The board looks at Mussburger.

. . . It's genius. It's just exactly what Hudsucker needs at this juncture. Sure, sure, a blind man could tell you that there's an enormous demand for this, uh. . .

He smiles weakly at Norville.

. . . Congratulations kid, you've really outdone yourself. Reinvented the wheel. I'm going to recommend to the board that we proceed immediately with this, uh. . . with the, uh. . . that the dingus be mass-produced with all deliberate speed. Of course, as president of the company the ultimate decision is yours.

Norville
Well. . . I'm for it. . .

As furiously busy music starts:

CUT TO: TELETYPE

Furiously printing out EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE #37451-JL7. A hand enters frame and rips the directive from the teletype, then hurriedly rolls it into a cylinder and slips it into a cylindrical metal capsule.

The capsule is popped into a pneumatic tube.

ANGLE ON a length of pneumatic piping--somewhere in the labyrinthine substructure of the Hudsucker Building. We hear a missile furiously hurtling towards us, inside the pipe, and rocketing by.

ANGLE ON another length of piping. Once again we hear the capsule approach and rocket past.

BLINKING RED LIGHTS as a SIREN BLARES. On a huge board that says HUDSUCKER DESIGN DEPARTMENT, flashing red letters announce: INCOMING DIRECTIVE!

The pneumatic tube spout shoots out a cylinder and a hand eagerly picks it up and yanks it out of frame.

A technician in white laboratory smock is reading the directive as several other white-jacketed technicians crowd their heads around his shoulders, also reading. All of their eye and head motions synchronize as they eagerly read, devouring the document line by line.

A LARGE SHEET OF GRAPH PAPER is whipped down on top of a drafting table. Under the caption OVERHEAD ANGLE is a perfect circle. Under the caption HORIZONTAL is a horizontal line. Under the caption VERTICAL SIDE ANGLE is a vertical line.

EXTREME LOW ANGLE of several technicians looking thoughtfully down at the rendering. The head technician is stroking his beard and nodding.

CUT TO: THE RENDERING as a hand enters frame and stamps the drawing APPROVED.

CUT TO: TWO MORE LENGTHS OF PNEUMATIC PIPE as we hear the cylinder rocketing by.

SWISH PAN TO:
FROSTED DOUBLE GLASS DOORS

Lettered on the frosted glass is: "ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT Creative Bullpen". In sharp silhouette on the frosted glass we can see the three admen working inside. Two pace back and forth, smoking cigarettes, as they toss out ideas. The third sits slumped in front of a silhouette typewriter, his head resting on one hand, his other hand resting on a half-empty bottle of whiskey.

In the foreground, outside the frosted glass and so not in silhouette, sits a bored secretary reading "War and Peace, Vol. 1".

Adman One
We'll call it the Flying Donut!

Adman Two
The Dancing Dingus!

Adman One
The Jerky Circle!

SWISH PAN TO:

PNEUMATIC PIPING

With the cylinder rocketing by.

SWISH PAN TO:
"ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT" Wall Plaque.

CUT TO: HUGE POSTER

Up on the wall of the accounting floor is an enormous reproduction of the design department's rendering of the hula hoop. Over the poster is an enormous banner: "WHAT WILL THIS COST?"

PAN FROM the poster to a high angle shot of a floor full of accountants sitting at their rows and rows of desks; all are looking up at the wall poster as they operate their manual adding machines to the same beat.

All accountants wear identical vests, shirtsleeves, garters, visors, and spectacles.

The HEAD ACCOUNTANT stands in front of the room overseeing their efforts. He wears a full three-piece suit, a visor and a pince-nez.

CUT TO:
HUGE BOOK

Being dropped onto a desk. Its cover reads: SUMMARY OF COST ANALYSIS.

The book is opened and its pages, filled with rows of numbers, are flipped to the last page where we quickly pan down to THE BOTTOM LINE: Unit Cost. . . . $0.59
Suggested retail. . . . $0.79

CUT TO: EXECUTIVE

Looking down at the book as the head accountant hovers over his shoulder, waiting for his reaction.

The executive grimly shakes his head.

BACK TO BOOK:

As the accountants hand enters frame to scratch in "$1" in front of the suggested retail of $0.79.

A hand enters frame to stamp the bottom line: APPROVED.

CUT TO: ROCKETING PNEUMATIC PIPES

CUT TO: THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT
CREATIVE BULLPEN

The secretary in the foreground is now reading "War and Peace, Volume Two".

Adman One
Something short.

Adman Two
Sharp.

Adman One
Snappy.

Adman Two
With a litle jazz.

Adman One
The Shazzammeter!

Adman Two
The Hipster!

Drawing a circle in the air:

Adman one
The Daddy-Oh!

Adman Two
The Circle-o'-Gaiety!

CUT TO: ROCKETING PIPES

CUT TO: Men in asbestos suits throwing down their visors as they scurry and dive for cover behind banks of sandbags. A fierce explosion harshly illuminates the sandbags. As the explosion subsides:

The workmen cautiously peek out over the sandbags, then flip back their visors and rise to their feet.

THEIR POV: Bouncing among the flaming debris of the

explosion is a hula hoop, still intact.

CUT TO: ROCKETING PIPES

CUT TO: ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT
CREATIVE BULLPEN

The secretary in the foreground is now reading "Anna Karenina". The silhouetted admen, frustrated and hoarse, are still at it.

Adman One
The Hoopsucker!

Adman Two
Naww, the Hudsucker Hoop!

Adman One
The Hula Disc!

Adman Two
The Hudsucker Hoop!

The third adman, slouched motionless at the typewriter up until now, finally raises his head.

Adman Three
Fellas. Fellas!

Adman One
Ya got somethin'?

Adman Two
Ya got somethin'?!

CUT TO: PIECE OF ART PAPER

Printed at the top:

Hudsucker Industries Proudly Presents

Pan down to reveal:

THE HULA HOOP

Pan down to reveal:

An artist's hand working in fast motion to render the Hula

Hoop logo: A grinning, healthy 1950's boy with a spray of freckles, one fist thrown forward, the other behind, as if doing an athletic frug, a hula hoop spinning with action lines around his waist.

In seconds the artist has completed the logo and now, also in fast motion, he writes the slogan on either side of the boy: "You Know. . . For Kids!"

As the page is ripped off the art pad:

MATCH CUT TO:

The page being carried away in a continuous motion by an engineer who looks at it, nodding. We see that we are now *in an enormous* plant area. The engineer, grimy from his labors in this sweaty industrial realm, reaches up to pull an enormous lever.

CUT TO: **MACHINES GRINDING INTO MOTION**

CUT TO: DONUT SPOUT

As it begins to spit hula hoops in massive numbers.

The hoops are spit onto a long metal arm where they rest, hanging.

A bale of hula hoops is loaded into a Hudsucker truck to complete its load. The truck door is slammed shut.

An iron grill is thrown up to reveal the display window of a shop just opening for the day. In the window is an enormous Hula Hoop display, with various hoops strung up on wire in front of a large cardboard diorama--"You know. . . for Kids!"

Reflected in the display window we see crowds of people *scurrying by, indifferent to the display.* Inside the shop we see the proprietor by the cash register, his chin propped glumly in his hands.

In Norville's office, Norville sits anxiously awaiting the verdict of Amy who sits hunched over the ticker-tape machine, studying the emerging tape. Amy finally looks up at Norville and sadly shakes her head.

Back to the shop window. Crowds still scurry indifferently by. The shopkeeper stands idly in his doorway, smoking a cigarette.

We track in on the cardboard display. The displayed price of $1.79 has been crossed out. Underneath it, inked in: "Reduced: $1.59".

Back in Norville's office, Norville is nervously pacing. Amy still studies the ticker-tape. Once again she is forced to shake her head sadly.

Back to the shop's price display. The old $1.59 is suddenly covered as the hand enters frame to slap on a sticker: $1.49. A Beat. The hand enters frame to slap on a new sticker: $1.29. Then in rapidfire succesion: $0.99. $0.79. $0.49 Two for $0.25. Free with any purchase.

The alley behind the shop, where garbage and garbage cans sit waiting for collection: A mass of hula hoops starts rolling towards the mouth of the alley.

The mouth of the alley. The escaped hula hoop emerges and starts rolling down the street.

It rolls across the street. Cars violently brake to avoid it.

It rounds a corner and rolls up to a little boy, rolls in a circle around him, and finally wobbles to the pavement. The little boy looks at it, steps inside it, raises it to his hips and starts hula hooping. Somewhere a bell is ringing.

In a nearby schoolhouse, where the bell is ringing, the front doors fly open and hundreds of schoolchildren run out, screaming, heading home, but all in a dense pack.

The screaming pack of schoolchildren round a corner and--stop short, their screams abruptly halting.

They are staring, fascinated, at the hula-hooping youngster.

The children are dumbfounded. It is a moment such as they have never dreamed of.

Cut to the screaming pack, once again running, maniacal, possessed. We don't know where they are running, but we can guess.

Cut to a store jam-packed with screaming children, grabbing hula-hoops off the shelves.

BACK TO NORVILLE'S OFFICE. Norville sits slumped behind his desk, his head resting on the desktop, utterly

dejected.

Suddenly the ticker-tape hums to life and starts spitting tape. Amy looks at it with mounting excitement. Finally she looks breathlessly up:

Amy
. . . Norville!

Norville lifts his head from the desktop. A piece of scrap paper is sticking to his cheek. Dramatic fanfare music starts to swell.

We hold on Norville's expectant face. We hold. The music builds. We hold. We:

CUT TO:
NEWSREEL TITLE

We can see the "Tidbits of Time" logo as a solemn-voiced announcer intones:

Announcer
Rockwell News presents. . . Tidbits of Time! World news in pictures, we kid you not.

Picture dissolves to a pan up the Hudsucker Building. Cut to candid film of Norville getting out of a car, noticing the camera, grinning and waving as he walks, and taking a pratfall.

. . . What began as the brainchild of this Madison Avenue whiz kid is now a craze sweeping the nation. The "hula hoop", product of Hudsucker Industries, is a recreational device that some experts predict may eclipse television as a means of entertainment. . .

A television sits against a neutral background. A hula hoop rolls into frame and bumps the TV, pushing it out of frame.

. . . This dancing dingus of delight, this jerky circle of gaiety, is proving to be the toy of choice of most American youngsters.--Whoa-ho! Did I say youngsters?! Here's mom, taking a break from her household chores. . .

A woman switches off her vacuum cleaner, takes a hula hoop that is conveniently leaning against a nearby wall, and starts hula hooping.

. . . and even Dad is getting into the act!

In the office, Dad, smoking a pipe, is also hula hooping.

. . . and so the congratulations pour in for up-and-comer Norville Barnes, inventor of the hoop--including one very special call!

In jerky cinema-verite footage a woman is excitedly sticking her head in Norville's door.

Woman
He's on! He's on the line!

Swish over to Norville, agog, who picks up his phone and, voice breaking:

Norville
. . . Hello?

Crackling Voice
Hello, Norville. This is the President. . .

A half-wipe leaves a split screen with half of the screen remaining Norville, the other half becoming a still of Ike standing in a tank turret, pointing commandingly. Under the photo: VOICE OF GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

Ike
. . . I just wanted to congratulate you. I'm very proud of you, Norville. . .

Norville
Oh my God, sir!

Ike
. . . Mrs. Eisenhower is very proud of you. The American people are very proud of you.

FLASH BULB EXPLOSION
EFFECTS A CUT TO:

NORVILLE

Facing a battery of reporters at a news conference.

Reporter one

Mr. Barnes, how'd ya come up with the idea for the hula hoop?

Norville is holding one hand up to shield his eyes from the unaccustomed light. Amy stands next to him, beaming.

Norville
Well, it was no great idea, really. A thing like this, it takes a whole company to put it together, and I'm just grateful for the opportunity--

Reporter Two
Mr. Barnes, did you have any idea there'd be such a huge response?

Norville
Well, frankly, I don't think anybody expected this much hoopla--

He is cut short by a burst of laughter at his unintentional witticism.

Reporter Three
"Hoopla on the hula hoop"--can we quote you on that, Mr. Barnes?

Norville
Well sure, I guess--

Reporter Four
Mr. Barnes, are you thinking of giving yourself a nice fat raise?

Norville
Ha-ha-ha-ha. Come on, guys. . .

FLASH BULB EXPLOSION
EFFECTS A CUT TO:

NEWSREEL

A scientist with a van dyke beard, wearing a laboratory smock, is facing the camera. Behind hin we see other scientists studying a hoop that has been hooked up to a gyroscopic-looking device that analyses its various movements and properties.

Newsreel Announcer
What scientific principle explains the mind-bending motion of this whipping wheel of wonder?

A title supered over the scientist's chest identifies him as Professor Erwin Schweide.

Scientist
Ze dinkus is kvite zimple, really. It operates on ze same principle zat keeps ze earth spinning round ze sun, and zat keeps you from flying off ze earth into ze coldest reaches of outer space vere you vood die like a miserable shvine! Yes, ze principle is ze same, except for ze piece of grrrit zey put in to make ze whole experience more pleasant--

TRACKING IN TO:
THE MEAN LAUGH

We are in Norville's office, Norville behind his desk in long shot, laughing, as we begin to track in. There is something disconcerting about his laugh--it is harder, more businesslike, colder than the dopey laugh that accompanied his elevation to the presidency. Or perhaps it is only our imagination, for while still some distance away from him:

FLASH BULB EXPLOSION
EFFECTS A CUT BACK TO:

NEWS CONFERENCE

Newsmen follow Norville as he walks through the lobby of the Hudsucker Building.

Reporter One
Mr. Barnes, did the board consider you an "idea man" when they promoted you from the mail room to the presidency?

Norville
Well, I guess so; I don't think they promoted me because they thought I was a jerk.

Reporter Two
Mr. Barnes, what's the next big idea for you and Hudsucker Industries?

Norville
Jeez, I don't know. An idea like this sweet baby doesn't just come overnight. . .

Reporter

Mr. Barnes, are you--

Norville
--Although I'll tell you one thing: I certainly didn't expect all this "hoopla"!

This old joke brings a little polite laughter. Norville is smiling as he enters the elevator. As its doors start closing, leaving Amy behind:

Norville
. . . And you can quote me on that!

FLASH BULB EXPLOSION
EFFECTS A CUT BACK TO:

NEWSREEL

Announcer
Yes, it's hula hula everywhere! From the cocktail parties of the Park Avenue smart set. . .

A group of people in formal evening wear are sipping highballs and chatting as they keep hoops in motion round their waists.

. . . to sweethearts who want to be married in the "swing" of things. . .

A young couple stands before the altar hula-hooping.

. . . To our friend the Negro, in the heart of the dark continent.

Pan down from elephant to two natives hula-hooping as they grin into the newsreel camera.

TRACKING IN ON:
THE MEAN LAUGH

Yes, as we draw closer, it seems clear that his laugh is colder than before.

FLASH BULB EXPLOSION
EFFECTS A CUT TO:

NORVILLE

Sitting in a barber chair, face lathered up, as reporters

crowd in.

Reporter One
Mr. Barnes, Mr. Barnes, Rumpus Magazine has called you the most eligible bachelor of the year and the society pages have been linking you with high-fashion model Za-Za. Would you care to comment?

A burning cigar emerges from the lather around Norville's face. It waggles as he talks.

Norville
There's no truth to the rumors; we're just dear friends. . . .

He looks to one side.

. . . Isn't that right, Za-Za?

SWISH PAN TO:
ZA-ZA

Standing nearby. Evry man's dream, in a tarty sort of way.

Za-Za
(sexily)
Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-oww!

The newsmen react.

Reporter Two
Ho-leeee!

Reporter Three
Mr. Barnes, whither Hudsucker? Whither Norville Barnes?

Reporter Four
How do you respond to the charges that you're out of ideas? Has Norville Barnes run dry?

The barber is periodically pinching Norville's nose to shave under it; as he alternately pinches and releases, Norville's voice breaks from nasal to normal and back.

Norville
Not at all. Why just this week I came up with several new sweet ideas. A larger model hula-hoop for the portly. A battery option for the lazy and handicapped. A model with more sand for hard-of-hearing. I'm earning my keep.

Reporter Five
Speaking of that, Mr. Barnes, do you expect to get a raise?

Norville
Well by anyone's account I've saved Hudsucker Industries; our stock is worth more than it's ever been. And I expect to be compensated for that.

END TRACK IN ON:
THE MEAN LAUGH

Further track in on Norville ends in close shot, Norville's hands clasped on the desktop in front of him, as he finishes his hard, square-jawed, man-on-top laugh, gazing flintily into the camera.

Norville
--ha-ha-ha-HA-HA!

PULL BACK FROM:
WEEPING EXECUTIVE

The pull back from a blubbering executive reveals that we are at a board meeting. All of the board members sit around the table except for Mussberger who, a towel around his waist, is receiving a choppity-chop massage on a padded table from a muscular man in a bulging T-shirt.

Mussberger
Pull yourself together, Addison.

Addison snuffles.

Addison
Nobody told me! Nobody told me!

Mussberger
Quit showboating, Addison.

Addison
You sold <u>all</u> of our stock?

Mussberger
We dumped the whole load, Addison.

Addison
I had twenty thousand shares! I'd be a

millionaire now!

Mussberger
Sure, sure we'd all be millionaires. There's no point in looking back. At the time, Stilson thought dumping our position would panic the market, further depress the stock--then we'd buy it all back, and more of course, once it got cheap--

Addison
Cheap! CHEAP! It's never been more valuable! And I'm ruined! Ruined!

He climbs up onto the board table.

. . . I'm getting off this merry-go-round!

Executive
Addison!

Another Executive
Myron!

Addison
AAAAAHHH!

He runs down the length of the table and hurls himself toward the window and:

THWOK!

We cut outside, looking in, as Addison flattens against the foreground glass, his face squushing, but the window stays intact.

All stare in horror for a long silent beat.

With the sound of a squeegee being drawn across glass, Addison, still frozen, slides down the window, hits the floor, and falls stiffly back like a fallen tree.

Mussberger sits up and sticks a cigar into his mouth.

Mussberger
Plexiglass. Had it installed last week.

Executive
. . . Myron?

Mussberger
All right, so the kid caught a wave. So right

now he and his dingus are on top. Well, this too shall pass. Myrtle J. Mussberger didn't raise her boy to go knock-kneed at the first sign of adversity. I say, we made this kid and we can break him. I say, the higher he climbs the harder he drops. I say, yes, the kid has a future, and in it I see shame, dishonor, ignominy and disgrace. Sure, sure, the wheel turns, the music plays, and our spin ain't over yet.

NORVILLE'S OFFICE

A small chamber orchestra, the musicians in tails, sit playing "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik". Norville eyes closed, reclines in his desk chair, one uniformed woman stooping in front of him, manicuring his nails, another, behind, massaging his temples. A tailor is pinning up his pant cuffs.

A goon sits off to one side, hat insolently atop his head, reading the funny papers.

At length Norville stirs, opens his eyes, sits bolt upright, batting away the hands of the manicurist and temple-massager.

Norville
Hold it!. . .

The musicians' playing dribbles away to silence.

. . . Hold it. . . Nobody move, nobody breathe. . .

All sit frozen. You could hear a pin drop.

. . . An <u>idea</u>. . . is coming. . .

He gazes, eyes narrowed, off into space, squinting for his idea.

CLOSE ON TAILOR'S KIT

A straight pin is rolling across the top--it drops off--

EXTREME CLOSE ON FLOOR

Where the pin--ping!--hits.

NORVILLE

Deflates. He glares at the tailor.

Norville
It's gone now.

Everyone resumes work. The musicians resume playing.

The intercom buzzes and a female voice announces:

Voice
Miss Amy here to see you.

Norville leans forward to hit his intercom.

Norville
Is she in the book?--

The door bursts open and Amy storms in.

Amy
For Pete's sake, Norville!

Norville
Oh! Hello, Amy--was it--I thought she said Mamie--

Amy
Never mind about that. . .

She shakes a piece of paper at Norville.

. . . You know what those nincompoops in the boardroom are doing?

Norville
Well I wouldn't call them nincom--

Amy
They're going to discharge eight per cent of the work force here at Hudsucker. Why, in New York alone that means eighteen hundred people out of work, people with wives and children and families--

Norville
Well yes, we're pruning away some of the dead wood, but if--

Amy
You mean you know about this?

Norville
Know about it? You think the board would do anything like this without my authorization? No, this was my idea from the start.

Amy
Your i--

Norville
Ya see, Amy, if this eight per cent that we're sacrificing comes from the lowest ten per centile productivity-wise, then the remaining employees only have to contribute two per cent additional effort to yield the same productivity over all. But the beauty of it is, if the remaining employees feel insecure about their own jobs, their productivity will rise a good five or six per cent. So net output rises, while net payroll declines--

Amy
Payroll, output, numbers, decimal points! Norville Barnes, don't you realize that these are human beings, people like you and me who've made a commitment to Hudsucker Industries! They're not figures you can just erase from a ledger book, they're would you get out of here?!

This was addressed to the chamber orchestra, whose playing dribbles off. They look inquisitively at Norville, then rise to pack up their instruments and sheepishly leave the office.

. . . I've been watching you, Norville Barnes, even though you've been trying to avoid me--

Norville
Aww, Aim--

Amy
Shutup!--and don't think I haven't noticed how you've changed. I used to think you were a swell guy--well, to be honest I thought you were an imbecile--

Norville
Aww, Aim--

Amy
Shutup!--but then I figured out you were a swell guy, a little slow maybe but a swell guy! Well,

maybe you're not so slow but you're not so swell either and it looks like you're an imbecile after--

Norville
Aww, Aim--

Amy
Shutup!--after all! You haven't talked to me for a week and now I'm going to say my piece. Look, I've never been dumped by a guy before and that hurts, but what really hurts is that you've dumped everybody out there who's been counting on you. You had a chance--a real chance--to make a difference, and here you are throwing it away on behalf of a board that wouldn't give you the time of day if you. . . if you. . .

Norville
Worked in a watch factory?

The goon looks up from his funnies.

Goon
Huh-huh-huh!

Amy
(to the goon)
Shutup!
(to Norville)
Exactly! Don't you remember how you used to feel about the hoop? You told me you were gonna bring a smile to the hips of everyone in America, regardless of race, creed or color. Finally there'd be a thingamajig that would bring everyone together--even if it kept 'em apart, spatially--you know, for kids? Your words, Norville, not mine. I used to love Norville Barnes--yes, love him!--when he was just a swell kid with hot ideas who was in over his head, but now your head is too big to be in over!

Norville
Now, Amy--

Amy
Consider this my resignation--

THWOCK--She slaps him soundly.

The Bodyguard is on his feet.

Goon
Hey!!

CRACK--Amy kicks him hard in the shin.

. . . Awooooo!

Amy
--effective immediately!!

She strides to the door, leaving Norville rubbing his cheek and the goon hopping around on one leg.

FADE OUT

CLOSE SHOT PICTURE OF AMY

Pull back shows it to be her identification in her HUDSUCKER PERSONNEL file.

A hand brings into frame another picture of her--this one a newspaper clipping. She stands on a podium accepting an award; standing behind her are middle-aged identical triplets. The caption says "Amy Archer of the Wall Street Informer Receives Pulitzer Prize."

WIDER

We are in Mussberger's office. Mussberger is seated at his desk looking at the file picture and clipping; the sign letterer/scraper is leaning over his shoulder, having just put them down.

Mussberger
Hmmm. . . Thank you, Aloysius. This may be useful.

Aloysious nods wordlessly and turns to leave.

There is a quick knock at the door and Norville sticks his head in.

Norville
Say Sid--oh, I'm sorry.

Mussberger
Not at all, Norville, what's on your mind?

Aloysious leers at him as he squeezes past him at the door.

Norville
I was just thinking about those layoffs, Sid, and I gotta tell ya--I'm having second thoughts.

Mussberger
Sure, sure. Come on in, son, we'll discuss it. .

We are looking over Norville's shoulder, Mussberger small in the background. As Norville steps in and starts swinging the door closed:

. . . And I have something I have to tell you.

The door closes.

FADE OUT

NEWSPAPER

The headline, in screaming nine-point type:

FAKE!

There is a picture of Norville next to the subhead: Idea Man a Fraud.

Next to the sub-subhead is a picture of Buzz in his elevator-operator's pillbox hat: Stole Hoop Idea from Genius Elevator Jockey Clarence "Buzz" Gunderson.

The article is under the byline of Ignatious Smith.

Amy's Voice
You can't print that!

THE CHIEF

He grins.

Chief
We are printing it! She's hittin' the streets this evening--

SWISH PAN TO:

Smitty
--and she's dynamite!

Amy
But it's bunk, chief! Norville showed me his

design for the whatsit the day I met him! Why Buzz couldn't have invented it--look at the man--he's an imbecile!

Chief
Archer, you're a broken record. Fact is, Gunderson did design it--apparently he's some kind of prodigy--

Amy
Says who?

Smitty
You're not the only one with sources, Amy--

Chief
Smith has a source on the Hud board--very senior, very hush-hush--

Amy
Yeah, and I'll bet his initials are Sidney J. Mussberger!

Smitty
You've lost it Aim. You've gone soft by the looks of it--soft on the dummy from Dubuque--

Amy
Muncie!

Chief
Whatever! It's no dig on you, Archer, but this story is hot and you're no longer on top of it. Why, it's the scoop of the century--the other papers won't have the Gunderson dope til tomorrow--The Allemeinischer Zeitung, Le Figaro, they'll be choking on our dust come mornin'--

Amy
You're fools, both of you! It's obvious they're out to crucify Norville!

Gently:

Chief
Amy--take a break. You've worked hard on this story--heck, you broke it for us! But it's passed you by now and Smith here has taken up the slack.

She is near tears.

Amy
You want slack, I'll give you slack. You're not putting me out to pasture, Al, I quit! Consider this my resignation--

She turns to Smitty--

--effective immediately!

--and swings--but he catches her before contact, holds her by the wrist, and sneers:

Smitty
. . . Soft.

Amy swings her free arm to--THWACK--blindside his other cheek.

EDDYING SNOW

On a city street. Tracking forward, towards a screaming newsie.

Newsie
FAKE!. . . Read all about it! Hud Prexy thief, not thinker! Ideas ersatz! Barnes not the McCoy! Brainstorm stolen! Man from Muncie a moron after all! Read all--

A man with a turned-up collar and pulled-down hat brim offers a dime and says, in a strangled voice:

Man
Paper.

The newsie hands him one and resumes screaming as the man staggers off down the street:

Newsie
Read all about it! Barnes' brain caught red-handed!

INT. DINER

Norville sits at the counter, a cup of coffee and the paper both ignored in front of him, his cheekbone propped against one hand as he stares at the coffee spoon he holds in front of his face.

Amy

Looks like you're feeling pretty sorry for yourself.

She sits down next to him.

Norville
Hiya Amy. Looking for a nitwit to buy your lunch?

Amy
. . . I guess I deserve that. I'm sorry, Norville. I was too ashamed to tell you. I. . . I told 'em this story was the bunk. I tried to get 'em not to run it.

Norville
Aww, what's the difference. I sure played the sap for you.

Amy
That wasn't your fault, Norville, it was mine! And you can fight this thing! You've gotta release a statement--I can help you write it--branding this thing the lie that it is! You've gotta fight, Norville, you can't just let it stand!

Norville
Aww, what's the difference. Why do a hatchet job on Buzz like. . . like. . .

Amy
Like the one I did on you.

Norville
And start the whole darn cycle over again. Who knows, maybe Buzz <u>has</u> some good ideas. The fact is, I'm fresh out.

Amy
Well, that just about does it! I've seen Norville Barnes, the young man in a big hurry, and I've seen Norville Barnes the self-important heel, but I've never seen Norville Barnes the quitter, and I don't like it!. . .

She starts pumping her arms, slowly chanting:

. . . Fight on, fight on, dear old Muncie. . .

She steps back off the stool.

. . . Fight on, hoist the gold and blue;
You'll be tattered, torn and hurtin'
Once "The Munce" is done with you!
GoooOOOO EAGLES!

She looks hopefully for some effect, but the fight song has left Norville unmoved. He murmurs, sadly shaking his head:

Norville
I can't believe you lied to me. A Muncie girl!

Despair fights with confusion on Amy's face.

Amy
But Norville. . . I. . .

She realizes he is still the simple innocent she loved--

. . . Oh, Norville!

--and bursts into tears.

She runs out of the diner.

CUT TO:
BOARD MEMBER

Sitting in a darkened board room, gazing off at a screen that sends flickering light onto his face.

Voice from Screen
Dell me vat is first zing droppensie head ven I menzhon ze vord Zex?

Listlessly, from screen:

Norville's Voice
Aww, what's the difference.

THE SCREEN

Flickering black-and-white footage of Norville in his office, lying on a couch that has been brought in, being interviewed by someone offscreen. Norville is still gazing listlessly at his coffee spoon.

German Voice
Und ven I zpeak of Authority?

Norville

Awww, I dunno.

German voice
Eggzplain please ze zignifikanz of ze spoon.

Norville
Nuthin', really.

A shadow is thrown across the screen as a figure steps in front of the beam. He throws the sharp silhouette of a strict Freudian analyst: Vandyke beard, pince-nez with chain trailing down to his vest, one thumb hooked into his vest, the other hand holding a cigar wreathing smoke, which he waves for emphasis.

Analyst
Patient dizplayed liztlessness, apathy, gloomy indifference und vas blue und mopey. . .

The image on screen cuts to four inkblots. The analyst sweeps in a pointer and thwoks each image as he comments on it.

. . . Ven asked vut four Rhorschach stains repre-zented Patient replied, "Nussing much," "I don't know," "Chust a blotch," und "Sure beats me."

The image onscreen cuts to a close shot of Norville on the couch, mouth listlessly agape.

. . . Patient shows no ambition, no get-up-und-go, no vim. He is riding ze grand loopen-ze-loop--

Image cuts to a syne wave on a graph, the top of which is labeled "Euphoria," the bottom of which is labeled "Despair," and a reference line through the middle labeled "Normal". There is an X on the declining side of the wave, near but not yet at the bottom, which is labeled "Patient".

--zat goes from ze peak of delusional GAIETY to ze trrrroff of dezBAIR. Patient is now near--but not yet at!--ze lowest point; ven he reachensies bottom he may errrRRUPT und pose danger to himself und uzzers.

MUSSBERGER

He sits casually puffing on a cigar.

Mussberger

Diagnosis, Dr. Bromfenbrenner?

Bromfenbrenner
Patient is eine manic-depressive paranoid type B, mit acute schizoid tendencies.

Mussberger
So Patient is. . . ?

He twirls a finger round his temple.

Bromfenbrenner
Prezizely. Knots.

The board murmurs.

Mussberger
Prescription?

Bromfenbrenner
Sree sinks. Kommitment. Electro-confulsif therapy. Maintenance in zecure wazility.

As he scores each point it is illustrated on the screen behind him: A patient is forced into a straitjacket by two brawny, unshaven attendants; electricity arcs between two leads on a wire cap being wielded by a technician; and lastly, a steel-barred door is slammed shut behind a stooped and broken patient who is led, shuffling, away.

Here the film runs out, chattering, and the screen goes white.

The projector is shut off and the lights go on.

The board politely applauds.

NEWSPAPER WIPES UP INTO FRAME

Next to a picture of Norville is the headline MUNCIE MENTAL CASE. The subhead: Hud Chief to Tend Daisies. Sub-subhead: Headshrinker Calls Him Walking Time Bomb.

Newsie's Voice
Extra! Extra! New Year's Eve Edition!

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT PAIR OF EYES

Reacting to newspaper.

Newsie's Voice
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

BACK TO PAPER

A hand enters to push it away.

WIDER

Norville pushes away the paper that the newsie has shoved into his face. He pulls his hat brim down, digs his hands back into his coat pockets and trudges on through the swirling snow.

Around him people rush to and fro in evening wear, some in party hats, on their way to New Year festivities.

CLOSE

On Norville trudging. Voices well up, echoing:

Voices
. . . You're not so slow but you're not so swell either and it looks like you're an imbecile after all!. . . Noooo, I don't guess you will be here long. . . Sure, sure, but even there they called you dipstick. . . lamebrain. . . dope. . . schmoe. . . And is this sap from chumpsville?!. . . imbecile after all. . . Norville, you let me down. . . You let Mrs. Eisenhower down. . . You let the American people down. . . imbecile after all. . . imbecile. . . Manic-depressive paranoid mit acute schizoid tendencies. . . Sure, sure, the kid's screwy--it's official. . .

BOARDROOM

Hellishly bottom-lit board members sit around the table, conical New Years hats on their heads. Mussberger, the only one not wearing a cap, waves his cigar as he continues talking:

Mussberger
. . . The barred-window boys are out looking for him now, and we'll see how Wall Street likes the news that the President of Hudsucker Industries is headed for the booby-hatch.

The board murmurs appreciatively.

. . . Why, when the Doc gets through with him he'll need diapers and a dribble cup. . .

More murmuring.

. . . Let me remind you about our secret post-New Years party that will be held shortly after midnight tonight in the office of the President. Remember, it's strictly stag, so leave the wives at home; we'll be showing some films and, yes gentlemen, there will be exotic dancers.

Louder murmuring. One board member leers, a trace of spittle at the corner of his mouth.

Well, if that's all. . .

With an unnatural rumble he straightens his papers and we jump up to:

HIGH NIGHTMARISH DUTCH ANGLE

Of the assembled around the table.

All
LONG LIVE THE HUD!

NORVILLE

Norville trudges on, faster, sweatier.

Voice
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!. . .

People come and go, laughing, talking, blowing noisemakers, making merry.

. . . RING OUT THE OLD! RING IN THE NEW! RING OUT THE--

THOOMP!! Norville has run into someone. He looks up, dazed.

Voice
Hey, watch where you're--Say, buddy!

It is Buzz, the elevator boy, dresed in an ill-fitting tuxedo and a conical party hat. Za-Za is on his arm,

towering over him, leering at Norville.

Norville
--Uh. . . Buzz--

Buzz
Say Buddy, Mr. Muss--uh, Sid tells me you stole that swell hoop idea from me. What gives!

Norville
But Buzz--

Buzz
Say, that was a swell idea!

Norville
But Buzz, you know that--

Buzz
And Sid says you stole it!

Norville
But--

Za-Za
Well wuddya waiting for, Clarence?--Pop him one!

BOFFO!

Buzz swings and Norville hits the snow hard.

Buzz
Think about that, Idea Man!!

Norville groggily raises his head.

Passerby
Say, isn't he that lunatic?

Norville looks dopily up at the people in furs and party hats starting to gather.

Voices
. . . that big-shot faker. . . the Wall Street fraud guy. . . nuttier than a fruitcake. . . they say he's a menace. . . wuddya waitin' for, call a cop!. . .

We hear sirens.

Norville staggers to his feet. The crowd cringes.

. . . He's on his feet. . . We can take him!

Norville bursts through the crowd, running.

Buzz starts giving chase, followed by the braver souls, followed by the entire mob.

Norville runs, gasping, turning a corner.

. . . Down here! He went down here!

Behind Norville, the crowd rounds the corner, led by Buzz. A van is screeching to a halt and out jump two burly unshaven men in white, one of them holding open a straitjacket, the other carrying a large butterfly net. They join in the chase.

Norville turns down an alley. A drunk drooping off a lamppost gaily waves a bottle at him.

Drunk
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

The crowd is running past the mouth of the alley, missing the turn-off.

LIMESTONE FLOOR

Norville, gasping, crashes down into frame, his hands breaking his fall against the limestone. The camera spins ninety degrees to reveal that it is not floor but wall he has run into and is now leaning against. Norville looks up, sweating, gasping.

HIS POV

The massive Hudsucker Building looms dizzily up towards the stars, capped by the huge Hudsucker Clock.

Distant Voices
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

MUSSBERGER'S OFFICE

We are tracking across the office toward Mussberger, his feet up on his desk, laughing demonically, smoking his cigar. Click-click-click--the perpetual motion balls swing on his desk; THRUMMmmm--the sweep second hand of the clock, illuminated now, casts a moving shadow that rolls across

the floor. Evil prevails.

A piece of paper and a pencil lie on his desk; as we approach we pan down and swing around to read it, loosing Mussberger from frame but still hearing his laughter.

Moving in on the paper:

Musssucker Industries

Hudberger Industries

Sidsucker Industries.

This last alternative has been circled in red. Below it has been scribbled:

Sidney J. Mussberger, President.

Evil laughter.

Sweeping shadows.

CUT TO:
NORVILLE'S OFFICE DOOR

We are tracking in toward the back of Aloysius, the sign painter, who is stooped in front of the door. He looks back over his shoulder, leering past the camera, to reveal his work: Under PRESIDENT Norville's name has been scraped away, and painted in is SIDNEY J. MUSSBER. . .

NORVILLE

He pushes past the sign painter.

INT. OFFICE

Dark and empty. Norville is peeling off his coat as he staggers over to the closet.

We can hear distant revelry and the strains of "Auld Lang Syne."

Norville has pulled his old mailroom apron from the closet and is putting it on: HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future Is Now.

Norville looks at the door.

Through the glass we see the tail of the last R of "Mussberger" being painted into place.

Norville throws open the window.

Wind whistles.

He climbs out.

THE LEDGE

Norville, back against the wall, looks cautiously down.

We hear distant chanting:

Voices
Ten. . . nine. . . eight. . . seven. . .

HIS POV

A sickening drop. Receding snowflakes. On the street far, far below, a lone car's headlights cut through the falling snow.

Voices
Six. . . five. . . four. . .

WIDER ON NORVILLE

We are floating in; it is the shot with which the movie began. The sweep second hand of the Hudsucker Clock is approaching the 12 of midnight, the New Year. In sync with the clock the chanting continues:

Voices
Three. . . two. . .

We have come in close on Norville. A lone tear runs down his cheek.

. . . One. . .

BONG! The toll is right at Norville's ear. Startled, he reaches up to press hands against his ears. Distantly:

Voices
Happy New Year!

BONG!!

He can't stand it. Whimpering, hands to his ears, he edges his way back toward the window.

HIS POV

The open window at a steep angle. Someone inside slides it shut.

Norville waves.

Norville

No--

BONG!!

His gesticulation and a shuffle step upset his balance--he trips--falls--catches the ledge--

--No, please!

He is hanging onto the icy ledge by his fingertips. His feet dangle away. Snow falls.

HIS POV

Looking steeply up. Gazing down at us through the closed window is Aloysius. His expressionless exhale momentarily steams the glass. He turns away.

BONG!!

Norville struggles to keeps his grip.

His fingertips slide--slide--

Norville

No. . .

EXTREME CLOSE ON FINGERTIPS

They slip from the edge. Empty wind.

NORVILLE

Falling.

BONG!!

INSIDE THE CLOCKWORK--Almost deafening, the tolling bell reverbs in the cavernous room. High on a catwalk Moses, holding his broom, turns from a small window at the center of the Hudsucker clock.

His POV--Moving in on the clockworks. A huge lever, blackened with grease and hung with cobwebs.

BONG!!

NORVILLE falls. Silently. Down the facade of the Hudsucker Building.

BONG!!

On the reverb Moses reaches for the lever as--BANG The door to the clockworks is kicked open. Aloysious moves through the open doorway blocking Moses. Light from the room outside glints off his razor/scraper as he slices the air. Moses leaps clear.

BONG!!

Norville, falling, turning lazily in the air. Now plummeting head first toward the street.

THE CLOCK ROOM

Tracking low as Aloysious slices the air in front of Moses, driving him back out onto the catwalk, into the bowels of the clockworks.

Moses swings the broom handle--Aloysious ducks. Moses kicks, knocking the razor out of Aloysious' hand. It clatters away across the catwalk. They grapple, each holding the broom handle.

NORVILLE

Falling.

MOSES

Backed up against the huge cog-wheel gear of the Hudsucker clock. He wrenches the broom handle free and swings, catching Aloysious on the chin and sending him back over the railing of the catwalk.

BONG!!!

THE STREET

Rushes up toward Norville.

ALOYSIOUS

Falls.

NORVILLE

Falls--and suddenly, with a great moaning sound--he stops, suspended in mid-air, head down, feet in the air--moments before impact.

It is much like the freeze frame on Waring Hudsucker that the title of the film was supered over.

He waves his arms, to no effect, looks around.

PEOPLE IN THE STREET

Frozen in attitudes of laughter, celebration. Snow sifts silently down around their motionless bodies.

MUSSBERGER

In his office, frozen with an idiotic laugh pasted to his face.

HIS PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS

Frozen, one ball swung out but suspended, hanging at the apex of its arc. Outside the great arched window, snow falls.

NORVILLE

He alone can move, but doesn't fall. Still looking awkwardly about, his body in a dive-bomber attitude, canted steeply down.

EXT. HUDSUCKER CLOCK

Its sweep second hand is arrested at a few seconds after midnight.

CLOSE SHOT GREAT GEAR

The broom handle has been jammed between two cogs, stopping them. We pull back along the handle to reveal Moses, who has thrust it there, and who now turns back over his shoulder to address the camera.

Moses
Strictly speakin', I'm never spozed to do this but. . . have you got a better idea?

NORVILLE

Twisting back to look up over his shoulder; there is a distant--very distant--singing.

HIS POV

Looking up the length of the Hudsucker Building. Someone or something wrapped in white is flying toward us, coming down from the stars.

We can make out a male voice, accompanied by strumming:

Voice
She'll be comin' around the mountain when she comes,
She'll be comin' around the mountain when she comes. . .

NORVILLE

He gapes.

THE ANGEL

--For it is an angel, arrives. He is a balding man, wearing rimless glasses, in a white robe, large feathery wings sprounting from his back and beating heavily until he comes to rest, in mid-air. He puts aside the harp he has been strumming on a nearby windowsill.

Angel
How ya doin', kid?

Norville
Mr. . . . Mr. Hudsucker?

Hudsucker
Ta-daaaa!

Presenting himself, he spreads his arms and stamps his forward foot, forgetting that there is nothing beneath his foot to stamp. He lurches forward, momentarily losing his balance.

. . . WOOooo!

He rights himself. The halo spinning lazily over his head has been jarred askew. With a flick of his forefinger he rights it.

. . . How d'ya like this thing? They're all wearin' 'em upstairs now.

He blows a dismissive raspberry.

. . . It's a fad.

He pats at his robe, produces a white cigar.

. . . Anyway. I hear you've been having, uh. . .

He casually flicks his thumb out of his fist, lighting it. He lights the cigar off his thumb, takes a puff.

. . . Been having some problems with the Board. The more things change, know what IyayayeeEEEE. .

Pain reminds him that he has forgotten to extinguish his flaming thumb, which he now waves frantically about.

. . . Jesus Christopher--That smarts. . . Where was I? Oh yeah, the Board. I guess Sidney's been puttin' the screws to ya, huh Norman?

Norville
Norville.

Hudsucker
Mm. Well, say what you like about the man's ethics, he's a balls-to-the-wall businessman. Beat ya any way he can. Straight for the jugular. Very effective.

Norville

He's been very nice to me.

Hudsucker
Huh? Where the hell're you from?

Norville
Muncie.

Hudsucker
Terrific. Any particular reason you didn't give him my Blue Letter? I mean, Jesus, Norman, just a dying man's last words and wishes, no big deal.

Norville
Huh? Oh, geez, Mr. Hudsucker, I apologize, there was just, a lot of excitement and I guess I lost it--

Hudsucker
It's sittin' in your apron pocket, right where you left it.

He shakes his head in disbelief.

. . . Imbecile.

Norville reaches in and--pulls out the wrinkled Blue Letter.

Norville
Oh, geez.

Hudsucker
Failure to deliver a Blue Letter is grounds for dismissal.

Norville
Geez, I--

Hudsucker
Ah, it's New Year's, I'm not gonna add to your woes. I'm just saying.

Norville
Yessir.

Hudsucker
Anyway. The reason I'm down here--you wanna read it?

Norville
Sir?

Hudsucker
Yeah, go ahead. Might learn something. Might keep you from jumpin' outa anymore windows.

Norville
I didn't exactly jump, sir--

Hudsucker
Look Barnes, you wanna read it or dontcha?!

Norville
(rattled)
Yes sir--Thank you--I'm sorry. . . From the desk of Waring Hudsucker. To. Sidney J. Mussberger. Regarding. My demise. Dear Sid. By the time you read this, I will have joined the organization upstairs--an exciting new beginning. I will retain fond memories of the many years you and I--

Hudsucker
Yeah yeah, it's the standard resignation boilerplate--go down to the second paragraph.

Norville
Many years, uh. . . It's been said by many that I never made a wrong move at Hudsucker Industries. These people are wrong. From the standpoint of our balance sheet and financials, sure, sure, we've done well. However, let's face it, Sid, we have ossified. We can expect no growth in the sixties without fresh blood.

Hudsucker nods modestly and waves with the cigar for Norville to continue.

. . . Accordingly, in the spirit of circulation, renewal, and the ringing in of the new, I hereby bequeath my entire interest in the company, and my seat on the board, to whomever is Hudsucker's most recent employee at the time of my demise. I know this will disappoint you--you, Sid, who have served so dilligently and for so long. But--

Hudsucker
--tough titty toenails!

He roars with laughter.

. . . That'll show the bastard!

More laughter. Finally:

Okay, okay--skip to the last page.

Norville
Finally, you are no doubt wondering why I have decided to terminate my tenure both at the Hud and here on earth. Here is the reason, plain and unadorned: I am alone. I have discovered that business reversals are especially painful when one has no helpmate to shoulder some of the burden and soften some of the blows, and even the sweetest of success's fruits turn bitter on the tongue of he who cannot share them. I loved a woman once, Sid, as you well know--a beautiful, vibrant lady, an angel who in her wisdom saw fit to choose you instead of I. . .

Norville is interrupted by loud blubbering. He looks up.

Hudsucker is weeping loudly into a white handkerchief. He saws at his nose, gives it a loud honk, and urgently quavers in a voice strangled with emotion:

Hudsucker
Skip this part. . .

He waves his hankie in get-on-with-it circles.

. . . Last paragraph, last paragraph.

Norville
And so, Sid, let me urge you to work closely with the new president--

Norville glances up in response to a loud nose honk, and then goes back to the letter.

. . .and to keep giving Hudsucker Industries all your energies--but not all your heart. For much as you may love your work, your work cannot love you back. Long live the Hud. Waring Hudsucker. . . Geez.

Pleased with himself:

Hudsucker
Yup. It's all there. . .

He clears his throat.

. . . Well, see that it's delivered in the morning.

Hudsucker picks up his lyre and heads back up toward the stars.

Hudsucker
Sheeel beeee. . .

MUSSBERGER'S OFFICE

Mussberger still sits frozen in his chair. Outside the great arched window Hudsucker rises, through the falling snow, on his way back to the heavens.

. . . Ridin' six white horses,
She'll be ridin' six white horses
She'll be ridin' six white horses
When she comes. . .

We hear a great wrenching sound from the gear room next door.

THE GEAR ROOM

Moses pries the broom handle loose from the the Great Gear. With a low moan the clockworks start to shudder and turn--

THE SWEEP SECOND HAND

Lurching forward--

THE PERPETUAL MOTION BALL

Swinging down--

THE PAVEMENT OUTSIDE

As Norville falls the last few feet and lands on his face with one last mighty BONG of the Hudsucker Clock.

BOOM DOWN

From a tavern sign that says ANN'S 440, down to the front door, which Norville is entering.

INT. ANN'S 440

Sitting halfway down the bar is Amy staring morosely into a coffee cup. At the cut we are tracking back, pulling away from her.

Norville enters, comes up next to her and makes the Go Eagles sign, hooking his thumbs in front of his nose and spreading his fingers.

Two familiar voices narrate the scene, sounding a little tipsy:

Lou
What the heck's he doin', Benny?

Amy looks at Norville, startled. After a moment she reciprocates the sign.

Benny
What the heck's she doin', Lou?

Lou
What the heck they doin'?

Norville and Amy embrace.

Benny
You know what they're doin' now, Lou.

Lou
This I know, Benny.

Benny
This you're familia' with.

Our pull back ends looking across an elbow of the bar, towards Norville and Amy now in wide shot. Resting on the bar in the extreme foreground are two champagne glasses, half-full of fizzing champagne.

Norville and Amy kiss.

Lou
. . . Geez.

Benny
. . . Geez.

We hear labored, raspy breathing.

Lou
. . . Y'all right, Benny?

In a quavering voice:

Benny
. . . Yeah, I'm. . . it's just. . . It's beautiful, Lou!

Lou also is beginning to sound choked up:

Lou
It is beautiful, Benny.

Almost weeping as Norville and Amy continue their embrace:

Benny
. . . It's the most beautiful t'ing I ever saw.

Lou
. . . It's the most beautiful t'ing I ever saw.

A bartender enters to block our view of Norville and Amy. He is youngish, with a beat goatee, wearing dungarees and a sweatshirt with cut-off sleeves. He looks to either side at Benny and Lou.

Bartender
You cats comin' from a party?

Benny
Cabbies' affair.

Lou
Hacks' New Years gala.

Bartender
Crazy. Get you anything else? Sangria? Carrot juice? Herbal tea?

REVERSE

Benny and Lou are sitting side by side at the bar. Lou wears a fake whispy beard and white eyebrows and a long flowing robe; he holds a fake scythe. Next to him, on the bar, sits an hourglass.

Benny is wearing nothing but an oversize diaper, a baby bonnett and a sash across his hairy chest and thick belly that says "1959."

Lou
Bromo.

Benny chucks himself in the heart, cocks his head and sucks in air, then blows it back out.

Benny
. . . Bromo.

THE BLUE LETTER

Lying on the boardroom table. As a hand enters to lay a wristwatch on the table next to it, we hear the voice of Moses, the old maintenance man.

Moses
And so began 1959. The new year. . .

The hand reenters to lay down a wallet, and then to deposit a burning cigar in an ashtray.

. . . And the start of a new business cycle. When he learned that Norville owned the comp'ny, ol' Sidney was upset at first. . .

We tilt up to show that Mussberger is walking toward the boardroom window. Board members silently remonstrate with him as he tries to wrench it open.

. . . It's a good thing Doc Bromfenbrenner was there. . .

Doctor Bromfenbrenner stands to one side watching, brow furrowed, a pencil pressed to his lips.

. . . 'cause he was able to keep Sidney form harmin' his ol' self.

We cut to a barred door being slammed behind Sidney who, straightjacketed, is puffing on a cigar as he is led away.

. . . Now Norville, he went on an' ruled with wisdom and compassion. . .

We are in the boardroom again. Norville is eagerly pointing at a design he has up on an easel: under the heading BRAND NEW is a large circle. The side view is a flat line.

. . . and started dreamin' up them excitin' new ideas again. You know, for kids!

The board members look at the design, puzzled.

Norville takes a drop cloth off of a piece of plastic on a pedestal. He has the board's complete attention.

> . . . An' that's the story of how Norville Barnes climbed away up to the forty-fourth floor of the Hudsucker Buildin'. . .

He picks up the plastic disc and as he sails it we:

CUT OUTSIDE

As it floats out the boardroom window.

> Moses
> . . . an' then fell all the way down, but didn't quite squish hisself.

We boom up, away from the boardroom, to the great Hudsucker Clock.

> . . . Ya know, they say there <u>was</u> a man who jumped from the forty-<u>fifth</u> floor. . .but that's another story. Heh-heh-heh! Ya-heh-heh-heh!

We fade out on the clock as Moses' laughter grows distant and end music swells.